BGSU considers future of general education

A group of faculty gathered in the union Feb. 11 to hear the results of a review of the University's general education program and to begin the discussion about possible next steps. The resulting conversation revealed that, in the eyes of faculty, general education cannot be considered in isolation but must be part of the total picture of undergraduate education and, indeed, the University's very identity.

Drs. Richard Keeling and Richard Hersh of Keeling and Associates presented findings from their study of the program's curriculum, policy and requirements and from intensive interviews conducted with faculty, staff and students during a visit in January. The study was commissioned by the Office of Academic Affairs and centered on three big questions:

- Does the general education program at BGSU require serious institutional review?
- Is this an appropriate time for such a review? Are there special opportunities in the current context?
- If a review is to be done, what might be the best ways of proceeding to assure useful and positive outcomes?

The context in which the questions are being asked includes such factors as the recent appointment of President Carol Cartwright; the search to fill the provost position on a long-term basis; several interim deans; differing opinions about the role of Arts and Sciences in general education; a decline in enrollment and retention and "a conflict between aspirations and resources," expected to last another couple of years and maybe longer. These factors tended to figure in responses both pro and con to the first and second questions, Hersh said.

Need

To the question of whether a review is needed, a strong preponderance of participants said yes—with the notable exception of the College of Musical Arts. Those who felt the program needed revamping cited not just "institutional cycle," but their perception of problems with coherence of the program, confusion about its purposes, requirements and results; and with students' perception that the courses were simply to be gotten through and not a core part of their education.

The students' responses "exactly paralleled the faculty's on this question, Hersh noted. For those faculty and staff who said no, it tended to be because they did not see any need for change and felt general education was working.

Timing

There was more diversity of opinion on the second question, that of timing, but again, the same reasons were cited by those for and against the review. The current economic problems, other major processes under way, turnover in top administrative positions and the loss of faculty positions were among the factors respondents offered as both reasons for their opinions.

"Most people looked at this cluster and said this is the ideal time," Hersh said. Some felt that faculty taking ownership of general education and thereby defining the character of Bowling Green more clearly would "make the provost search more interesting and BGSU more appealing to candidates," Hersh related. Others felt some of the above issues should be resolved before tackling general education, while yet others felt the University had been waiting too long already.

In terms of prioritizing activities and stewardship of resources, faculty raised the question of the Strategic Planning initiative now under way and the mandate from the University System of Ohio that institutions define themselves and their centers of excellence. With these "fundamental types of core urgencies" at work, can BGSU undertake to redesign its general
education program at the same time, they asked.

That point led directly to the expression that general education cannot, in fact, be a separate entity from the rest of the curriculum but is in itself a defining characteristic of any institution and the foundation for all majors. It should thus be folded into both the strategic planning process and the identification of BGSU’s centers of excellence, many in the room agreed.

“If general education is the soul of an institution, it must express some core beliefs of the faculty,” Hersh said. And if it is such a powerful form of curriculum and pedagogy, perhaps it should be a four-year program rather than two. Addressing a commonly expressed criticism of general education, he said, “If students perceive it to be busy work, with low standards, not tested for rigor and they see no results in their learning, more damage than good can be done.”

However, to create a more rigorous curriculum, with, for example, more writing across all disciplines, would involve a good deal more work for all faculty, and that question would have to be examined and possibly decisions made about what to eliminate.

“The faculty have to structure this or it won’t happen,” Hersh said.

Process
As to the kind of process that should be utilized if the University does decide to conduct a review and revision, there was general agreement that it must be extremely transparent. Concern was expressed about “unintended consequences” of a review process and assurances given that potential consequences, either academic or financial, associated with options will be given serious consideration.

All respondents agreed that it must also be one in which everyone can have a true part.

It also must have support from the upper administration “in a material way,” Hersh asserted, adding that in the team’s conversations with President Cartwright, they found her to be committed to the process.

Conversely, the administration would need commitment from faculty that it is willing to persevere through the process, which is time-consuming, and to embrace any eventual plan, Hersh said.

Hersh and Keeling recommended that there be a “slightly disruptive innovation in leadership.” This would entail a strong steering committee, a “process observer” who would monitor and report objectively on progress, and working groups who would create core models. A Web site should be created and updated frequently with authentic and transparent reports on activities.

They strongly recommend that institutions hold retreats during which the faculty would have time to “really do what it does best—think,” Hersh said. Recommendations resulting from these extended meetings would then be taken up on campus. To be successful, Hersh said, “candor has to be the coin of the realm.”

Lastly, there has to be an element of fun, he added unexpectedly. Having plenty of time to engage in fruitful discussion creates energy, he said. But the overall timeline must be realistic: not so protracted that it drains energy nor so short as to be shallow.

The good news
On the plus side, in comparison with many other institutions engaged in a reexamination of their general education programs, Bowling Green has already accomplished significant and superior study and thinking on the topic. “There’s exceptional work here. The building blocks are in place,” Hersh noted. In its review of existing documents, the Keeling team reported, it found evidence of a “rich and sophisticated understanding of and commitment to a robust conception of outcomes-based general education. These documents effectively, and often eloquently, describe learning as holistic, transformative, integrative, engaging and developmental.”
If the University decides to proceed with the general education review, it must take stock of itself and what it already has in hand, celebrate what is good and weed out the rest, Hersh said.

“All good learning theory tells us that deep, true learning takes place in a state of psychological distress and disequilibrium. Within crisis there really is opportunity.”

Catherine Cardwell, interim vice provost for academic programs, said that review of the Keeling report will continue. Those who would like to comment or discuss further should contact the provost’s office.

Welcome future Falcons

A little "above and beyond" could go a long way, admissions director Gary Swegan says, as the campus community welcomes prospective students and their parents to today’s Presidents’ Day open house.

“In the economic environment we’re in and the challenges we face, any touch points with students will be more important than ever,” says Swegan, who advocates “going a step further than we even typically do—express desire to have a student on our campus.”

More than 2,000 high school juniors and seniors and nearly 7,000 visitors in all are expected at the 14th annual open house. Swegan described the online registration volume as “really strong,” and David Rice, assistant director of admissions, noted that 200-300 “walk-ins” normally add to the crowd.

The key, Swegan says, is to convert more of today’s visitors into this fall’s students, heightening the importance of personal contacts.

Presidents’ Day, added Rice, is “a day to put our best foot forward and show people what Bowling Green really is.”

BGSU Firelands sets enrollment record

BGSU Firelands reached a new milestone with a spring 2009 enrollment of 2,405, the largest headcount in the college’s history. This semester’s enrollment surpassed the previous record of 2,354, which was set last fall.

The college enrolled 431 more students this semester than the spring 2008 total of 1,974, an increase of 21.8 percent. The campus experienced growth in freshmen (8.9 percent), sophomores (14.6 percent), seniors (8.9 percent), undergraduate nondegree (77.6 percent) and master’s degree (183.3 percent) students.

Firelands student credit hours increased by 13.1 percent. This spring, student credit hours grew to 22,363, in comparison to 19,773 in spring 2008.

“We are delighted with the growth, particularly the numbers of new freshmen and undergraduate nondegree students who have chosen BGSU Firelands this spring as their college,” said Interim Dean James M. Smith. “Special initiatives like the dual enrollment grant, expanded Saturday offerings and classes at Norwalk High School are helping us to provide affordable access to a quality BGSU education for more and more students in our area.

“As Ohio seeks to increase the numbers attending college, the regional campuses are playing a central role in driving enrollment growth across the state.”

To help more students and their families prepare for college, Firelands holds outreach events
such as the Feb. 8 “College Goal Sunday.” This free, statewide financial aid workshop, presented by the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, assists students and parents with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), required to receive federal financial aid.

One of 40 sites in the state to host the workshops, Firelands welcomed 224 visitors that day.

Environment is focus of upcoming events, activities

Students and staff are getting their “green on” this spring with a number of environmental activities.

Geopolitical analyst and internationally known columnist Gwynne Dyer, familiar to local readers from The Blade, will give the 2009 Lamb Peace Lecture (see next week’s Monitor). He will speak on “Climate Wars: The Geopolitics of Climate Change” at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union Theater.

A campus sustainability conference is being planned for March 25 by the newly named Department of the Environment and Sustainability, the Center for Environmental Programs and the campuswide Environmental Sustainability Committee. To get involved, contact Dr. Gary Silverman, 2-7774.

For two weeks beginning today, residence halls are engaged in “energy wars” to see who can save the most electricity. This activity was conducted last year by the Greek units, according to campus Sustainability Coordinator Nicholas Hennessy, and resulted in not only significant energy savings but creative ideas about how to achieve them. A green crown and prize the whole hall can enjoy will go to the winners.

Once again this year, BGSU is participating in the Recyclemania competition, which pits hundreds of schools nationwide against one another in a bid to see who can collect the most per-person recycling. At BGSU, halls are competing against one another as well as for the chance to win prizes. Recyclemania continues through March 28.

A “green dining” initiative called “Caught Green-Handed” now through March 17 has students experiencing environmentally conscious changes to the Sundial Dining Center.

As spring approaches, other plans are under way. The orange bike program is gearing up to get rolling after spring break. Volunteer bike mechanics are tuning up the fleet of donated bicycles and will train anyone who would like to help. The program will provide bicycles for use by campus community members who can pick them up and drop them off as needed in designated spots around campus.

Later in March, there will be a used athletic shoe collection on campus and in the community. The shoes are converted into outdoor recreational and playing surfaces in areas that have such a need.

Hennessy and the student Environmental Action Group can also help with ideas for Earth Week (April 21-24) activities.

The eighth annual When You Move Out, Don’t Throw It Out collection will be held at the end of the semester. This program, conceived of and administered by Hennessy and residence life, has kept tons of usable goods out of local landfills while providing much-needed food, clothing and household items to needy families.

For more information or volunteer for any of these projects, or for help planning your own, contact Hennessy at nickhj@bgsu.edu.
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Gala to celebrate Hamilton's Olympic anniversary.

It has been 25 years since Bowling Green's Scott Hamilton brought home the Olympic gold in figure skating. BGSU will commemorate that momentous event Saturday (Feb. 21) with a special evening honoring the champion skater, who has gone on to other achievements in entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

The gala in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union will include a reception and dinner with Hamilton, his wife, Tracie, and fellow figure skating medal winners Kitty and Peter Carruthers, four-time U.S. national champions and 1984 Olympic silver medalists in pairs competition. Newly crowned U.S. women's champion and BGSU senior Alissa Czisny is also scheduled to attend the event, which will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Lenhart Grand Ballroom.

Today (Feb. 16) is the R.S.V.P. deadline for the gala, which offers two ticket packages, with proceeds to benefit the Dallas-Hamilton Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. The silver package, at $300 per person, includes dinner and a signed copy of Hamilton's new book, *The Great Eight*. The gold package, at $1,000 per ticket, also includes a VIP reception before the dinner, a DVD of Hamilton's performances, an autographed photo with Hamilton and a ticket to the Sebo Series in Entrepreneurship this spring.

A silent auction featuring sports memorabilia is also part of the event, which is black tie optional. To make reservations, call Joan Simon at 2-3411.

In 2004, Hamilton and BGSU alumnus Bill Dallas co-founded the Dallas-Hamilton Center in the College of Business Administration to help train aspiring entrepreneurs. The college is hosting Saturday's event.

Following his skating victories, Hamilton went on to co-found the highly successful Stars on Ice. He has independently produced ice shows, covered the Winter Olympics as a commentator with CBS Sports, won an Emmy Award for a television special and has received praise for his on-air commentary and for his biography, *Landing It*, published by Kensington Books.

Hamilton now tours the country as a motivational speaker, talking about his life and overcoming cancer, which interrupted but did not end his career on the ice. He is also a spokesperson for a number of charitable and philanthropic organizations.

BGSU celebrates Czisny's success

The campus congratulated senior Alissa Czisny on Feb. 12 for her U.S. women's figure skating championship. On hand to celebrate her Jan. 24 victory in Cleveland were fellow students, faculty and administrators, including President Carol Cartwright, who read a message from Bowling Green's first national-champion skater, Scott Hamilton.

"I adore Alissa Czisny," the 1984 Olympic gold medalist wrote. "She is everything you want in a ladies' champion, on and off the ice.

"I believe she is the best skater to come out of Bowling Green," added Hamilton, who will be back in his hometown Saturday (Feb. 21) for a gala benefiting the Dallas-Hamilton Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. (See separate story.)

"She's one of ours; she's part of the family," Cartwright said. Noting the presence of Bowling Green Mayor John Quinn, the president called Czisny a "great ambassador" for the city—where she also grew up—as well as the University.

Others speaking at the Feb. 12 reception were Joseph Oravecz, associate vice president for student affairs; Dr. Timothy Pogacar, who, as chair of German, Russian and East Asian languages, addressed Czisny's academic success, and Laura Dunn, recreational sports/Ice Arena.
Representing the Bowling Green Skating Club, Dunn and three young club members—Marissa Avery, Linzy Fitzpatrick and Ethan Alday—presented Czisny with a poster that had been on display in the Ice Arena for well-wishers to sign. The new U.S. champion, said Dunn, is "an inspiration to everyone who walks in that building."

Before sitting down to sign autographs, Czisny, who is scheduled to graduate in May, thanked Bowling Green "for supporting me for so many years and for being such a great community."

Cartwright pointed out that the event came exactly one year before the opening of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. An Olympic berth will be on the line when Czisny skates in the world championships in Los Angeles next month.

IN BRIEF

BGSU Firelands’ Margaret Barbour wins ‘Spirit of BG’ award
Margaret Barbour, a BGSU Firelands library associate, recently received the classified staff ‘Spirit of BG’ Award.

Presented monthly by Classified Staff Council, the “Spirit of BG” award recognizes classified employees who perform daily acts that build and strengthen the University community on and off campus. The honor comes with a cash award and a certificate.

Barbour has been employed at the BGSU Firelands library for over 34 years and has held several positions there. In addition to other duties, she is in charge of book collections, acquisitions, accounting and billing. She has served on numerous committees and is now the Firelands representative to the University's Classified Staff Salary Compensation Committee and the House Bill 309 Committee, which helps educate classified staff on the bill's potential changes to the classification and pay-range policies.

Remember Richard Hoffman with gift to learning community
The family of Richard Hoffman, the late director of the Partners in Context and Community Residential Learning Community, has said that memorial contributions may be given to PCC.

Donors should make checks payable to “BGSU Foundation 30-001942” and, in the note section, list “In Memory of Richard Hoffman.”

Checks can be mailed to: BGSU Foundation, Mileti Alumni Center, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0053.

CALENDAR

Monday, Feb. 16

Film Screening, “Juchitán, Queer Paradise” (2002), a portrait of Juchitán, a small Mexican city near the Guatemalan border where homosexuality is fully accepted and gays are simply a third gender, 7 p.m., 107 Hanna Hall. Sponsored by Transcendence.

Tuesday, Feb. 17
BGSU Firelands Training Session on hazardous waste management, 10-11 a.m.
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1004 Cedar Point Center. Register by calling 2-2171 or visit www.bgsu.edu/offices/envhs/page22440.html.

Community Partnership Series, "An Introduction to Service-Learning Pedagogy," 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 201 University Hall. Register at www.bgsu.edu/ctl/page10718.html.

WellAware Brown Bag Lunch Series, "Know Your Numbers," discussion by a panel of medical professionals about what blood pressure, cholesterol and other important numbers mean and how to track them, noon-1 p.m., 316 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Instructional Design Workshop Series, "Extending the Classroom Experience with Podcasting," 1-2 p.m., 201 University Hall. Register at www.bgsu.edu/ctl/page10718.html.

Architecture Lecture Series, featuring Craig Borum, award-winning designer, faculty member at the University of Michigan and founder/principal architect of Ply Architecture in Ann Arbor, Mich., 6 p.m., Union Theater. Series organized in collaboration with the American Institute of Architecture Students. This session is sponsored by bigjonstudio.

Cultural Event, "A Taste of February," celebration of Black History Month with a little "taste" of history while showcasing student performances in art, music, dance and the spoken word, 6-8 p.m., 202A Union. Hosted by the Office of Residence Life's Social Justice Task Force.

Film Screening, "Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis at 100" (1990), a rare opportunity to experience a century of our history as lived by one thought to be the oldest "out" African-American lesbian, 7 p.m., 107 Hanna Hall. Part of the Black Queer Warrior Series and sponsored by the Committee Advancing Racial Equality and the LGBT Resource Center.

Tuesday Night Film Series, "A Boy and His Dog" (U.S., 1975), 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Recital, featuring the Horn Choir and Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Part of BGSU's Brass Week.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

Classified Staff Council, 10:30 a.m., 315 Union. A presentation on "How to Be a Better Health Plan Consumer," by Donna Wittwer, benefits, will precede the meeting at 10 a.m.

Community Partnership Series, "Getting Involved with Nonprofits," 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 201 University Hall. Register at www.bgsu.edu/ctl/page10718.html.


ICS Fellows Talk, "Stray Ejections, Misplaced, Shrouded in Forgetting": History, Trauma, and the Politics of Absence in Theresa Cha's 'Gdictes," with Ellen Berry, ICS Fellow, English and American culture studies, 1:30 p.m., 207 Union. Part of the Artists and Scholars in Residence Lecture Series.

Provost Town Forum, 4-5 p.m., 202B Union.

Faculty Artist Series, featuring trombonists William Mathis and Garth Simmons, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Thursday, Feb. 19


Popular Culture Colloquium, 11 a.m.-noon, with brown-bag lunch from noon-1 p.m., 315 Union. Desserts and beverages provided. Contact benphil@bgsu.edu for more information.

Bowling Green Experience Discussion Series, "Accommodations for Student Success," 12:30-1:45 p.m., 201 University Hall. Register at www.bgsu.edu/ctl/page10718.html.


Diversity Dialogue, "Whites in Black History," focusing on important figures such as those who helped in the Underground Railroad, with Marshall Rose, director of the Office of Equity and Diversity, and Dr. Jack Taylor, retired ethnic studies faculty, 2:30-4 p.m., 201 Union. Sponsored by the Office of Equity and Diversity, the Center for Multicultural and Academic Initiatives, and the ethnic studies department.

BGSU Firelands Guest Speaker, "A Sor- rowful Journey: The Removal of the Shawnee, Seneca, and Ottawa from Ohio in 1832," with Dr. Randall Buchman, professor emeritus, Defiance College, 7-9 p.m., Cedar Point Center.

MFA Reading, with Stokely Klasovsky, poetry, and Catherine Templeton, fiction, 7:30 p.m., Prout Chapel.

International Film Series, "Peteljinsz zajtrk (Rooster's Breakfast)" (Slovenia, 2007), 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

FEBRUARY 16, 2009
Concert, featuring the BGSU Trombone Choir and Trumpet Ensemble, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Friday, Feb. 20
Women's Research Network, "Whose Ideal Is It Anyway?: Presumed Media Influence and Pluralistic Ignorance on the Norm of Ideal Thinness," with Dr. Sung-Yeon Park, telecommunications, 1:30-3 p.m., Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall.
Open Mic Night, "Zeta Cafe: Open Mic & Filled Seats," fund-raiser for sickle cell anemia, 6-9 p.m., Black Swamp Pub.
Recital, featuring guest artist Paul Merkelo, principal trumpet with the Montreal Symphony, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Assisting will be BGSU faculty member SoYoung Fang-Tzu Liu, piano. Part of BGSU's Brass Week.

Saturday, Feb. 21
Trumpet Master Class, hosted by guest artist Paul Merkelo, principal trumpet with the Montreal Symphony, 10 a.m., Kelly Instrumental Rehearsal Hall, 1012 Moore Musical Arts Center.
Indoor Track, Sid Sink Open (high school meet), 10 a.m., Perry Field House.
Young People's Concert, "Meet the Buzzelli's," hosted by Chris, Julie, Gina and Joe Buzelli, 11 a.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Tickets are $2 for adults and $1 for children and will be available at the door 30 minutes before the performance.
Men's Basketball vs. Canisius, 2 p.m., Anderson Arena.
Hockey vs. Michigan State, 5:05 p.m., Ice Arena.
Gala, "An Evening with Scott Hamilton," commemorating the 25th anniversary of Hamilton's Olympic gold-medal performance in figure skating. Event features a silent auction, dinner, program and dancing, 6:30 p.m., Union Ballroom. Hosted by the College of Business Administration, with proceeds benefiting the Dallas-Hamilton Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. The deadline to register is today (Feb. 16). For more information, call Joan Simon at 2-3411 or visit www.cba.bgsu.edu/events/Scotthamilton.html.

Sunday, Feb. 22
Gymnastics vs. Ohio State (Senior Day), 2 p.m., Anderson Arena.
JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY
There were no jobs posted this week.

Labor Postings
http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE
www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

There were no obituaries this week.