Thoughts as He Slips Out of the Door –
Chapter 3: A Hard Conversation
(In the issues of DEANotes that will be published between now and R-Day, Wheeler is going to reflect on his 43 years in higher education and comment on a few of the important issues that are sometimes missing in campus conversations.)

Barely into my first year as Dean of Arts and Sciences at AASU, I found myself on the way to the office of Dr. K, a much admired teacher and advisor:

Wheeler: “Dr. K, I understand that you refused to provide the accommodation prescribed in the ADA letter from the counseling office that was brought to you by Ms. Smith.”

Dr. K: “You are correct. I had philosophical objections to the accommodation that was requested.”

Wheeler: “I understand that you do not agree with the accommodation that was requested, but the initials A.D.A. stands for the Americans with Disability Act. The accommodation requested is the law of the land, to fail to provide that accommodation breaks the law.”

Dr. K: “But what about Academic Freedom?”

Wheeler: “The principle of Academic Freedom does not trump the law. You can certainly break the law for reasons of conscience, but as is true for every conscientious objector you will be subject to the penalties for breaking the law. Since we are a state institution, the penalties will surely impact your employment.”

Dr. K: “I had never thought of it that way. I will have to rethink my position.”

This is a very short article but it deals with a very important issue – an understanding of requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA accommodations) in the college classroom. First of all, know that I have long wished I had been at the table when the Americans with Disability Act was being written. I believe that I could have made contributions that would have made the Act more efficient to implement and more effective for students. However, I was not there … and the law is what it is.

The key word in the last sentence is “law.” The ADA accommodations that find their way into the accommodation letters that the student places in the faculty member’s hand carry all the weight of the American legal system with them; they are not optional. The concepts of Academic Freedom and Intellectual Property, as important as they are, do not trump the ADA accommodation requirements. This does not mean that faculty are without any recourse. Consultations with the on-campus officer who wrote the accommodation letter (Laura Bowen) and with one’s department head or dean might reveal flexibility that is not immediately obvious, but after the consultations are over and the accommodation is fine-tuned, we need to execute the accommodations in the way that external experts assert will serve the student.

The Dream Team:
The recruitment firm of Ed and Ed are pleased to announce the leadership team for the soon to be born School of Arts and Sciences:

Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences: … Dr. Ed Whitelock

Department Heads:
- Biology…………………………Dr. Theresa Stanley
- Business & Public Service………Dr. Jeff Knighton
- Mathematics & Physical Science……Dr. Allan Gahr

Interim Department Heads:
- History & Political Science:…………….Dr. Tom Aiello
- Humanities…………………………Dr. Steve Raynie

Thank each of you in advance for your good work in the next academic year.

March 15, 2013

Vol. V, No. 8
BaskiNotes

Faculty comments on petitions: We will soon be headed down Petition Parkway again, from midterm through the end of the semester. If you are asked to comment on a student petition, please include at least a summary of your thinking in the comments box, online or on paper. The division chairs, school deans, and I are at least somewhat removed from a given situation, and the information you supply is invaluable to us. (In some situations, more detailed information is needed for us to understand.) Thank you in advance.

Responding to disruptive behavior: After my article last month on this topic, I discovered that there is some confusion about the role that Public Safety and Student Affairs may play in the handling of disruptive behavior. I would break down the answer in this way. The guidelines below under "mildly disruptive" behavior are intended to help prepare for and deal with that type of behavior. On the other hand, if at any point student behavior becomes "threatening, violent, and/or out of control," either Public Safety or Student Affairs will be your first contact, depending on the circumstances, as outlined below. Although safety is the prime concern in responding to disruptive behavior, establishing a classroom environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning is also a desired goal. I have reformatted the article and made additional comments to help clarify these emphases. (I greatly appreciate Dr. Joe Mayo’s work as reader and editor and Chief Mason’s comments.) Contact me if you have questions.

First, general advice from Director of Public Safety Jeff Mason: A best practice is to write things downs as they occur. Word of mouth is never good enough. Having notes is always helpful. The memory fades and we are into the details.

Guidelines for mildly disruptive behavior
1. Treat the classroom situation, in general, as an opportunity to teach appropriate behavior in a college classroom to those who need it. Make students aware of expected behavior by publishing your expectations in your syllabus and going over the syllabus at the beginning of the semester.
2. If a problem does occur, remind the student of your expectations as they appear in your course syllabus. If you can address the issue without embarrassing the student, all the better, as disruptive students may need to learn new habits. Responding the first time that a problem occurs, or when you first recognize that there is a problem, tends to help considerably.
3. When you believe that a student has had adequate opportunity to correct his or her behavior but has chosen not to do so, you can tell the student to leave your class and that he or she cannot return until the student has met with you outside of class. (See comment #1 under “Threatening” when this scenario applies to situations that transcend mild classroom disruption.)
4. If the student meets with you, it will be up to you to decide whether the student is serious about changing his or her behavior. You have the option of telling the student that he or she will not be allowed back in your class.
5. Should you not permit the student to return to class, tell the student that you will email your department head, division chair, or school dean with the details and that the student should make an appointment to talk to that person. Let the student know that the matter may be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or Vice President for Student Affairs, contingent on the outcome of this meeting. If the matter proceeds to this point, a written account from you will be necessary--if adequately detailed, the earlier email to your department head, division chair, or school dean will suffice.

Threatening, violent, and/or out-of-control behavior
1. If a student’s classroom behavior creates a need for a conversation outside of the classroom, but you are uncomfortable for any reason about being alone with the student in your office, ask your department head, division chair, school dean, or a faculty colleague to sit in on the meeting. The meeting can also be held in the office of the department head, division chair, or school dean. If none of these options would seem to work, you might talk to your department head, division chair, or school dean about other ways to communicate with the student. A prior conversation with the aforementioned administrative faculty member is advisable if you intend to communicate with the student solely through email.
2. If you, or any student in your class, feel threatened by a student who has not yet demonstrated overt behavior to this effect, you should talk to your department head, division chair, or school dean as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, Public Safety
3. If a student in any way threatens the safety of you or the other students in your class, call Public Safety’s emergency line, 678-359-5111. In addition, the incident should be reported immediately to Student Affairs. Call extension 5056 or email Dawn Byous, the administrative aide for Student Affairs, at dawnb@gordonstate.edu. She, in turn, will pass the matter forward to Dr. Dennis Chamberlain, Vice President for Student Affairs.

In addition, remember that on pages 286 and following of the current catalog you will find the policy you need to support you in your actions.

GahrNotes

Dr. Cris Fermin-Ennis would like to announce a 100% rate of acceptance of Gordon State College pre-pharmacy majors to pharmacy programs this year. “I am proud to announce that all 6 Gordon State College pre-pharmacy advisees: Dakota Thaxton, Jocelyn Hines, Derrick Keith Jones, Megan Carter, Maci McKneely and Bryan Bowers gained multiple acceptances and will be joining the incoming classes at Mercer University, South University, Samford University and South College.”

Dr. Marwan Zabdawi

- supervised the Helicopter competition event for the Science Olympiad that was held at Gordon State College on February 16. Then later in the day, he took members of the Engineering Club to the Monster Jam event at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. Some of the students described the event as thrilling, mind boggling and educational.
- February 22, Dr. Zabdawi served as a judge for the St. George Episcopal Middle School Science Fair in Milner.

Dr. Richard Schmude, Jr.

- gave a presentation about the Earth’s rotation to students at Covenant Heart Academy in Barnesville, GA on March 1, 2013
- talked about the seasons to a group of 2nd grade students at Orrs Elementary School in Griffin, GA on March 8.

GarrettNotes

It is with extreme pride that the Division of Nursing and Health Sciences announce that both Professors Theresa Buchanan and Margaret McIlwain have been accepted into the Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at Georgia State College and University. The DNP program prepares students to lead healthcare innovations and influence policy founded on analytic principles and evidence-based practice at the highest organizational level. Furthermore, this program offers multiple opportunities for collaboration, challenging problems for study, and a tradition of rigorous scholarship. When you see Teresa or Margaret on campus, please give them a congratulatory pat on the back.

Professors Samantha Bishop, Faith Garrett, Sarah Handwerker, Margaret McIlwain, Laura Patton, and Patricia Stewart podium presenters at the Georgia Association definitely felt Gordon’s academic presence at this academic event. As Dean of NHS, I could not be prouder of these individuals and their work. Topics presented at the event are as follows:

- Professor Samantha Bishop & Patricia Stewart—
  ---Simulation: A Day in the Life of a Pediatric Nurse
- Professor Margaret McIlwain & Laura Patton
  ---Clinical Simulation: Assessing the Acute Psychiatric Client
- Professor Sarah Handwerker
  ---Transforming Nursing Education: Rev of Common Practice
- Professor Faith Garrett
  ---Is the Invisible Minority Still Invisible in Your Curriculum?

HigginsNotes

In Fall of 2011, we piloted a Supplemental Instruction (SI) program here at Gordon State College. Supplemental Instruction is an academic support program that began at the University of Missouri-Kansas City back in the 1970’s. It was so successful at raising pass and retention rates that UMKC began to franchise it out, and now hundreds of colleges across the country run their own SI programs. SI works in the following way:

- We identify historically difficult core classes, ones that have high DFW rates over time
- We find a student who has taken such a class and passed it with a high grade
- We hire that student (called an SI Leader) to sit back in on the class, act as a model student, and hold three hours per week of peer-directed study sessions outside of class time (we provide the training)
- The SI Leader also holds two office hours per week, for students who need one-on-one help

Our own early SI results here at Gordon were mixed, but lately they have been getting better. We had
DEANotes is a quasi-monthly publication of Academic Affairs.

particularly good success in Fall 2012 in a couple of Western Civilization classes and a BIOL 1107 class.

As we look to expand our SI program, one challenge has been finding qualified students to act as SI Leaders, particularly in Math and Science classes. We are interested in attaching SI to Fall 2013 MATH 1111 classes, and I need your help in identifying potential SI Leader candidates. If you teach Math and know of such a candidate, or if you have an advisee who you think might make a good SI Leader for MATH 1111, please shoot me an email (phiggins@gordonstate.edu).

I would note in closing that effective SI Leaders generally possess a variety of qualities. Of course, aptitude in the subject matter is crucial, but so is an outgoing personality: SI Leaders need to market the program, attract students to the group study sessions, and run them effectively.

KnightoNotes

Until more official information can be sent to students, please advise any students who are interested in learning details about our new Bachelor of Science in Human Services degree to get in touch with Dr. Jeffery Knighton!

On Saturday, January 26, Dr. Marvin Thomas, 22 students from his Civil War history class, the director of community education and 13 community education students visited the Atlanta History Center and Cyclorama in Atlanta, as well as, the Nash Farm Battle site in Hampton. This trip was to commemorate the Civil War in Georgia during the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

Dr. Thomas also took this same group of students to the Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, GA on February 23.

Gordon State College students Faith Shafer, Wendy Giere-Frye, and Emily Mumford traveled with Dr. Christy Flatt to the Sociologists for Women in Society meetings in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico February 7 – 10. While at the meetings, Dr. Flatt was a member of the “Critique Me” panel. Special congratulations to Emily Mumford, Gordon State College Sociology major, for being awarded the Undergraduate Social Action Award by the Sociologists for Women in Society. Emily was one of three students from across the country that was recognized for their exceptional contribution to disadvantaged populations. (Emily founded and operates Alternative Spring Breaks.) Special thanks to Dr. Christy Flatt for recognizing Emily’s potential and successfully nominating her for the award.

On March 1 and 2, Dr. Joe Mayo presented an interactive symposium, “Personal Construct Theory: An Alternative Approach to Pedagogy in the Undergraduate Psychology Curriculum,” at the Southeastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology.

Dr. Prathibha Joshi and Dr. Kris Beck attended the USG workshop on "Improving the Connection with Online Students," on February 22 in Athens, GA.

Dr. Barry Kicklighter attended the Pike County Community Resource Meeting in Zebulon on March 6.


Dr. Jeffery Knighton attended the Lamar County Family Connection Collaborative meeting on January 24.

MooreNotes

Discover Your Goal at Gordon State College

Serving Adult Learners with a Smile! As a recent member of the Adult Learner Consortium (ALC) Gordon State College has established a mission to assist adult learners with the acquisition of college-level knowledge and insight through work experience or through educational experiences and courses that did not carry college credit. The process of validating these experiences and assigning college credit to them is called Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). At Gordon State College a Student can seek Prior Learning Assessment by using national examinations, by examination connected to specific Gordon courses, by assigning of credit for formal courses and tests connected to the workplace and validated by the American Council on Education (ACE), and by portfolio evaluation.

The Gordon State Community can learn more about the Adult Learning Program options through our website, www.gordonstate.edu and on Facebook (GSC
Adult Learning Community). There will be a special effort to reach new students during campus visit day and providing information about PLA options during New Student Orientation. Adult Learners will also have an opportunity to participate in events on campus such as a Coffee Hour, Technology Workshops and Health and Wellness Programs.

**RutherfordNotes**

**Book Display** - In support of the President’s Speaker Series on March 20, 2013, a display of books on the Holocaust and the Civil Rights Movement has been created.

**CHOICE Reviews** – All Schools/Divisions should be receiving a copy of CHOICE in a PDF format via email. If anyone has a problem with this process, please contact the library.

**WhitelockNotes**

**Dr. Doug Davis** edited a special issue of the journal *Configurations* on the fiction of Kim Stanley Robinson; the special issue has just been printed and mailed. He also presented a paper, “Flannery O’Connor’s Gothic Science Fiction,” at the American Literature Association Symposium on the Gothic in Savannah, GA. Finally, in two weeks he will present at Teaching Matters on using turnitin.com to mark up and grade papers.

**Dr. Karen Guffey** will be presenting a paper entitled “Study Abroad: Using Humor to Survive” at the annual Foreign Language Association of Georgia conference in Augusta on March 8. On April 5 she will be presenting a paper on “Using Hot Potatoes to Create Interactive Exercises” at the Southeastern Conference on Language & Literature in Savannah. She will be taking 14 students to Barcelona, Spain, for our Study Abroad Program in May.

**Dr. Rhonda Wilcox’s** book review of Stacey Abbott’s TV Milestones Series book on *Angel* appears in *Science Fiction Film and Television* 6.1.

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<tr>
<th>Dates &amp; Deadlines</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mar 18</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>College Culture Event Advising: Experienced Advisors 4PM Find Room SC 229</td>
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<td><strong>Mar 20 (W)</strong></td>
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<td>Early Registration for Continuing Students for Summer and Fall 2013 (M-F)</td>
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<td><strong>Apr 29 (M)</strong></td>
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<td>Last day of classes</td>
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<td><strong>Apr 30 thru May 3 (T-F)</strong></td>
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<td>Final Exams Book Buy-Back – Bookstore</td>
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<td><strong>May 10</strong></td>
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<td>Friday Graduation</td>
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