WheelerNotes

Conversation with Wheeler: Well, after eight months at Gordon College, Wheeler feels like he has worked here forever. However, others may feel like he is very new and unknown. With that in mind, you are invited to join Wheeler for either or both of two conversations.

Conversation 1: 2:00 pm on Monday, March 23 in the Foundation Room of the Student Center
Conversation 2: 4:00 pm on Tuesday, March 24 in the Foundation Room of the Student Center

Wheeler will not have a presentation but will attempt to answer questions and respond to observations brought by the faculty. Hence questions like, “Wheeler, why are we …,” are entirely appropriate as are suggestions such as, “Wheeler, we really ought to ….” Light refreshments will be served for those who converse better with food in the vicinity.

Gordon Team Attends STEM Conference: Professors Durojaiye, Jia, Rumfelt, Wheeler, Zabdawi, and Jarrett converged on the Marriott Evergreen Conference Center at Stone Mountain for a day of conversation about the teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. If that sounds oppressive to you, catch one of them over coffee with an ear to hear the important ideas that were discussed.

When each was asked the most important idea (or most useful idea) he or she heard the following comments were recorded.

Durojaiye: Many ideas on how students learn … how I reach students whose learning styles are different from mine … how I plan my course … what I do in the first week of class … how I get students actively involved in class … How I can teach students to be effective problem-solvers and to exercise a higher level of thinking skills.

Jarrett: We as teachers of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics should put more emphasis on student learning than on our teaching of these subjects. We should do more to encourage, engage, and retain our students. It is not good enough to just give a logical presentation of the subject.

Jia: The whole conference was very useful especially when I am still at a fledgling stage of developing my teaching career. It is a great opportunity to see experienced teachers sharing their pedagogical skills and discussing new topics in education. I recommend this conference to all STEM junior faculty members at Gordon.

Rumfelt: “Students are not blank slates. They learn new things based on previous learning and previous learning may interfere with their trying to make sense of the material.” (Professor Jose Mestre--University of Illinois). Dr. Mestre’s statement made me understand that as I present material to the students, in as clear a manner as I know how, it still may not be understandable by the student because of their previous learning experiences. Therefore, I need to use multiple (more than two) approaches to teach the material so that all of the students may understand the material.

Zabdawi: A subtheme of the conference was the importance of the students being somehow involved and responsible in the learning process. We (the professors) are simply the facilitators, but the actual learning occurs when they are by themselves studying and making sense of what had been explained in class.

The goal of the conference was to energize and improve the teaching of mathematics, science, and technology at the college level in hopes of creating a more scientifically literate citizenry, increasing the number of majors in STEM disciplines, and increasing the number of students seeking to teach mathematics and science in Grades 8 – 12.

BaskinNotes

The Humanities Division is conducting searches to fill open, tenure-track positions in English, Communication, and Theatre.

Advisors of Students with Learning Support Requirements: Look for an email regarding early and end-of-semester registration from Ms. Terry Betkowski soon.
Advising Reminder: Regents’ Test

- Please check each advisee’s Regents’ Test status this spring. We still have students who are exempt from or no longer have learning support reading and/or English requirements but that have not taken the Regents’ Test. We need to get everyone into the test who is eligible to take it.
- Students who score especially low on the Regents’ Test must take the appropriate Regents’ Skills class(es) the following semester, as well as re-take the test, and do so each semester until the test is passed. Students flagged with especially low scores and their advisors will receive a notification email. We will re-send an email for the fall semester’s list of students and will send a second email at the end of the semester, when spring scores are made available.

BursteinNotes

Four Business and Social Science Faculty are presenting papers at Teaching Matters later this month:

- Evelyn Schliecker and Joe Mayo, “Engaging Students through the Scored Discussion”

The popular Business and Social Science Monthly Forums are continuing this year with the next presentation on March 16 at 2:00, Evelyn Schliecker, “A Conversation about the Millennial Student.” This follows Jeremy Richards’ presentation on February 25, “Anti-communism in Moderation: South Carolina Committee to Investigate Communist Activity.”


MooreNotes

The M&NS Division continues to judge in area science fairs. The latest was Griffin RESA. Mrs. Susan Byars, Dr Richard Tsou, Dr. Greg Hartman, and Dr. Mark Brinkman participated.

On Saturday, February 28, The M&NS division hosted the Georgia Science Olympiad Tournament. Dr Theresa Stanley directed the tournament. Thanks to the faculty members from other divisions and to Plant Ops for their assistance. Twenty middle schools were represented by 300 students. Counting parents and coaches over 500 guests were on campus.

FacultyNotes

HigginsNotes

The Student Success Center is off to a great start thanks to all the support we have received from faculty. We are very encouraged by the early traffic numbers. Through the end of our seventh week of existence, we had logged 1614 students into the Center, including 578 “distinct” students, or roughly 15% of the overall student population. Once students do come in, they seem to like it here: approximately 100 different students have visited at least five times. Also, our tutoring business is booming. Here at the end of February we have already logged 500 individual tutoring sessions for Math and Writing combined. For the semester to date, Writing sessions are +111 over Spring Semester ’08 and +49 over Fall of ’08. In the Math Lab, we have had more business than we can reasonably handle; we are trying to emphasize to students that tutoring is NOT a substitute for attending class or for visiting professors during office hours.

Whenever peer tutors are used, there is understandably some concern among faculty about effectiveness. We have a sharp and capable staff of peer tutors, and we take every possible opportunity to train them. On February 21 ten student tutors and I drove down to Macon for the annual Georgia Tutoring Association conference. These students voluntarily gave up an entire Saturday—without pay—for the chance to develop their tutoring skills and better help their peers. They were active participants in the individual sessions and turned a lot of heads at the conference. I could not be prouder of the way they represented Gordon College.

Our Success Workshops are also off to a wonderful start. Chad Davies’s note-taking workshop and Ed Wheeler’s “How to Study for Mathematics” workshop both “sold out,” and Chad’s time-management workshop drew over 80 students this past Thursday afternoon. Ed Whitelock has a “How to Talk to Your College Professor” workshop coming up after Spring Break, and we will announce others shortly. While these workshops focus on the basic academic skills our students need to
succeed, their broader purpose is to get students to think of themselves as professionals and take responsibility for their academic careers. I’ve already gotten some great ideas from faculty and staff for future workshops and would welcome more. Chad Davies deserves special thanks for the incredible service he has provided our students.

Finally, the Success Center is currently developing a program to help readmitted students returning from Academic Suspension. We will start small, but we hope to have a well-rounded program that includes academic advising, a “Success Class” for one hour of academic credit, and perhaps even a peer-mentoring component in place by January 2010. We will continue to look for these kinds of opportunities to help students succeed.

Thanks again to everybody for all your support.

MilewiczNotes
The Honors Program is currently fielding applications for fall 2009. The final application deadline for new and existing students is May 1st. Applications are online at http://www.gdn.edu/honors as are program requirements and other information.

There will be two honors sections this fall.
1) HIST 1122-H Honors - Western Civilization II (Dr. Thomas Aiello)
2) COLQ 2994-H Honors Colloquium; Tolkien's Lord of the Rings: Literature and Culture. This colloquium will explore the literary qualities and cultural grounding of Tolkien’s work, including discussion of the hero's journey (Campbell's mono-myth), Tolkien’s medieval studies, and more. (Dr. Rhonda Wilcox)

Please note that Honors students may take Honors Colloquia multiple times with different topics. Additionally, Honors sections are also available to non-Honors students, as space allows. Please encourage your honors and honors-inclined students to contact me for enrollment in these courses, since students cannot self-register for honors sections.

PerkowskiNotes
A recent informal survey conducted by the Distance Education Committee (DEC) has identified both the target audience and main reasons students registered for online courses—flexibility of schedule and distance from campus. In 8 online courses 177 students responded to the survey.

majors of students enrolled in online courses: medical field 37%; education 15%; other 13%; business 12%; sociology/psychology 7%; biology 5%; English 5%; criminal justice 3%; political science 2%; computer science 1%.

reasons for online enrollment: flexibility of schedule 63%; distance from campus 17%; family time 11%; previous online course experience 5%; sports participation 4%.

The DEC continues developing and reviewing new course proposals.

Deadlines and Dates
Mar 5(R) Midterms
Mar 6(F) Residence Halls Close - Spring Break
Mar 9-13(M-F) Spring Break for Faculty & Students
Mar 18(W) Graduation Fair
Mar 18(W) GA History & US Constitution Exam
Mar 23, 24, 25 Regents’ Testing Program
Mar 26(R) Southern Culture Series
Mar 30-Apr 17 Early Regist/Continuing Students
Apr 17-19(F-Sun) Alumni Weekend
Apr 20-May 21 Open Registration
Apr 28(T) Regents’ Test Results Available
May 4(M) Last Day of Classes
May 5-8(T-F) Final Exams
May 7(R) NSO & Group Advising & Registration
May 16(Sat) Graduation
May 21(M) Early Registration/Open Registration Payment Deadline for 1st Session & Full Session Classes
May 25(M) Memorial Day Holiday
May 26(T) Open Registration & Last day to Withdraw & Receive Full Tuition for 1st & 2nd Session Classes
May 27(W) 1st Summer Session & Full Session Classes Begin
May 27-28(W, R) Drop-Add & Late Registration
May 28 (R) Payment deadline for Late Registration & Drop/Add
May 28(R) Last Day to Registrar for Regents’ Test
June 8 (M) Midterm for 1st Session Classes
June 17(W) Last Day to Withdraw & receive W
June 17(W) NSO & Group Advising & Registration for Fall Semester
June 17 (W) GA History & US Constitution Exam
June 17-24(W-W) Drop/Add
June 18 (R) Open/Late Registration (2nd session) Regents’ Testing Program
June 19(F) Midterm for Full Session Classes and All Evening Classes
June 22 (M) Final Exams for 1st Session Classes

DEANotes is a quasi-weekly publication of Academic Affairs