

# The Center Exchange

## October 1, 2008 Volume 1, Issue 1

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## <u>Contact</u> <u>Information</u>

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# **Greetings**

We are so excited to be distributing the first newsletter for the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). We will publish an electronic newsletter up to four times a year.

For those of you unfamiliar with the project, listed below are the highlights of the formation of CTE.

- March 08: Anna Maria College submitted a proposal to the Davis Educational Foundation Grant;
- April 08: The trustees from Davis Educational Foundation visited campus;
- May 08: AMC was awarded \$125,000 for use from 7/08-6/09;
- July 08: Sue Eliason, Project Director, and Chris Holmes, Associate Director began development of the center;
- August 08: CTE was promoted through a brochure distributed to the faculty and the Steering Committee was formed and met:
- September 08: Faculty. Development Self-Assessment was electronically distributed to all full-time faculty. The results will be used individualize faculty development. We provided an individualized consultation and observation.

Our **goals** for the Fall semester are to:

- Create a process for faculty to apply for Action Research Projects.
- Invite mentors for Spring 09.
- Work collaboratively with the Faculty Development Committee to plan and implement Lunch and Learns and an Impact of the Copyright Law on College Teaching workshop.
- Obtain videos and books for a CTE section in the AMC library

The Steering Committee is investigating possible spaces on campus for the Center and is asking for help in defining excellence in teaching. We hope you share your ideas.

We would like to invite faculty to submit articles to share in the Focus on Faculty section of *The Center Exchange*. Perhaps you attended or presented at a conference; we invite you to share your experience and learning with your colleagues. Once the article is written, submit it for review for publication in *The Center Exchange* at <a href="mailto:cte@annamaria.edu">cte@annamaria.edu</a>

Remember to return the *Faculty Development Self-Assessment*. We have received 9 surveys as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

# **Tech Tips**

Representatives from the Technology Committee met with Mike Miers and Deb Van de Ven on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Many changes are happening with technology on campus.

#### Student Email:

The student email accounts are changing from the annamaria.edu domain to amcats.edu domain. When students access email through the Anna Maria webpage their username is amcstu\USERNAME and their password is their Student ID number.

#### Faculty and Staff email:

You can access the webmail from link from the Anna Maria website. If you would like to bookmark the address it is <a href="https://webmail.annamaria.edu/owa">https://webmail.annamaria.edu/owa</a>.

Your username is going to be amcemp\USERNAME and your password is the same as it is to log into your campus computer.

Please note, that if you change one of these passwords it will change the other.

You may have noticed the new Global Address Book. All students, faculty, and staff are included.

## **Training:**

#### Office 2007

Office 2007 has been installed on your campus computer. For the Fall semester, Office 2003 is available. In January 2009, the college will only use Office 2007.

#### System:

Improvements to the system should support the growth plan to 2012. Many new safeguards have been added.

#### **Student Labs:**

You may have noticed new desktop backgrounds in the student computer labs. AMC is using the backgrounds to promote current events. Students are blocked from some social networking websites while in the lab, such as Facebook and MySpace, since the computer labs are to be used for educational purposes.

#### **AMC Website:**

If you should notice errors on the College website, please contact Deb Van de Ven. She is eager to fix any miscommunications.

#### **FacultyNT**

The new logos are available for use in a folder on FacultyNT. To get to FacultyNT on your office computer

- Select My computer.
- Select My Network Places
- Select Public Shared on Facultynt
- Select AMC Logos



## **Focus on Faculty**

Student Retention and Success:
A Non-Traditional Model
By
Susan K. Eliason, Ed.D.
Christine L. Holmes, Ed.D.

Article submitted for publication in the New England Faculty Development Consortium Fall 2008 newsletter

Anna Maria College has been involved with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Building Careers (BC) Grant program since 2004. The state funds 21 institutions of higher education to collaborate with EEC to ensure that all children attending a preschool program throughout the state have a highly qualified teacher in their classroom. The BC Grant funds four college courses per year to early education and care and out-of-school time educators who are seeking a degree in early childhood education or a related field.

The Anna Maria BC program is designed to help non-traditional students succeed academically and professionally by providing career and academic advising, using a cohort model, and scheduling courses on Saturdays to meet the needs of working adults. Courses are offered in an accelerated format using WebCT/Blackboard to supplement face-to-face instruction.

During the first year at AMC, the cohort group retained 24 of the 28 students (86%) that started coursework. The mean national first to second year retention rate for a BA program in a private school is 71.1% (National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates, 2004). The retention rate has remained high over the past four years and, to date, 11 students have graduated. Students who left the cohort did so for non-academic reasons including:

 Too long to complete the degree with only 4 courses a year. For example, one student had 3 transfer credits; the average group transfer credits is 50. Unavailability of childcare or other family related issues.

This is a summary of the program retention and graduation rates.

Fiscal Year	Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Students Retained	Number of Graduates
2004- 05	28	24	0
2005- 06	26	26	0
2006- 07	26	23	2
2007- 08	23	14	9
2008- 09	25		

The high retention rate most likely reflects the infrastructure of support provided to the BC cohort students. The entire AMC Community has been involved in the success of these students. The grant coordinators serve as academic advisors and develop relationships by meeting with each student in an effort to personalize advising. During advising, students who think they may need additional academic support are guided through the process of requesting assistance from the AMC Learning Center. Advisors work with the students and the Learning Center to arrange tutoring to fit each student's schedule. The coordinators collaborate with the Registrar, business office, and financial aid office to develop procedures for course registration and payment of student bills. The coordinators work with the Director of Career Services to assist students in finding an appropriate internship experience required for degree completion.

On September 2, 2008, the AMC Community welcomed 11 new students into the BC cohort group. There are currently 25 students enrolled in the cohort and 6 students expect to graduate in May 2009. A retention strategy used with the new students was a preenrollment orientation. The coordinators developed a 2-hour orientation and new students were provided with the following:

- Contact information for AMC support
- WebCT/Blackboard orientation
- Directions for applying for an AMC e-mail account
- Demonstration for navigating the AMC website
- Registration information
- Library card applications
- Logistics and expectations for accelerated courses
- Class cancellation policy
- Missed class policy

Habley and McClanahan (2004) identify the determination of student characteristics and needs and the consideration of both academic and non-academic factors as successful retention practices. By developing relationships with cohort students, the coordinators are able to determine student characteristics and needs and offer individualized support. Non-academic factors such as navigating the institution and the provision of social support also contribute to the high retention rates.

The cohort courses use WebCT/Blackboard as a learning platform to deliver instruction and, most recently, a Building Careers Communication Center has been added to increase the opportunity for academic and social support. The coordinators collaborate with the WebCT Administrator to compile courses for the students, and collaborate with other academic divisions on campus to hire and train faculty to teach BC courses.

Anna Maria College provides the resources to train faculty to deliver effective instruction. Faculty training includes a required certification course to teach in an electronic environment. Consistency, clear expectations, and timely and meaningful feedback are addressed. Faculty members engage in discussions regarding pedagogy, management, and the creation of a sense of classroom community. The coordinators work with the faculty who are new to the WebCT/Blackboard classroom to model effective practices. Morris and Finnegan (2008) validate the strategies used by AMC as effective practices for the retention of students in online courses.

The BC cohort retention rate demonstrates that AMC has effectively developed procedures for maintaining and retaining a non-traditional student cohort. The personal relationship with the coordinators appears to be a primary factor. Sharkin (2004) explained that the social and emotional adjustment is a critical factor in retention. The following student testimonials support this argument.

#### Testimonials from alumni:

Building Careers has given me an opportunity to be able to go to college. At the time I started in the Building Careers classes, I was a single parent of three adolescent children, money was tight, and I had been out of school for over twenty years. This program gave me the opportunity that I have always wanted but could not manage. The classes were held on a Saturday. This was a plus because with my work schedule and my children's extra curricular activities during the week, it made it feasible to be able to go to school, work and be involved with my children's school schedule. This program gave me something that I would not have been able to achieve without it; a college degree! Sincerely, Laurie Majka

Nancy Mahoney

I was fortunate enough to be accepted into the Building Careers Grant through Anna Maria College in January of 2005. This program provided a cohort, Saturday model. I believe this type of model was key to my success in obtaining my degree this past May. Throughout the program I felt a strong sense of support from faculty and my fellow students. As students, we all shared our experiences of balancing work, school, and family life. We learned so much from each other by sharing our work in the field and how we implemented the new skills we acquired from the program. Sincerely,

#### References

Habley, W. R., & McClanahan, R. (2004). What works in student retention - Four-year private colleges. Retrieved September 8, 2008, from American College Testing Program, Inc. (ACT) Web site: http://www.act.org/path/postsec/droptables/pdf/Fo urYearPrivate.pdf

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National collegiate retention and persistence to degree rates. (2004). Retrieved September 9, 2008, from ACT Web site:

http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/retain 2004.pdf

Sharkin, B S (Fall 2004). College counseling and student retention: research findings and implications for counseling centers. *Journal of College Counseling*, 7, 2. p.99 (10). Retrieved September 09, 2008, from Expanded Academic ASAP via Gale:

http://find.galegroup.com.ezan.ez.cwmars.org:3 400/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM



### The mission of the Center for Teaching Excellence

Anna Maria College values reflective practices that result in systematic assessment, quality improvement, and openness to growth. The Center for Teaching Excellence will serve to recognize, develop, implement, and evaluate innovative and effective teaching and learning strategies that foster student engagement.

# Are you interested in learning how to use WebCT?

We will offer the Faculty WebCT/Blackboard Course in January. There are two levels of training, Teaching Assistant and Designer level. To successfully complete the Teaching Assistant training you will attend three 1-hour sessions and participate in online discussions. To successfully complete the Designer level you would attend three additional 1-hour sessions and design a WebCT/Blackboard course in a "sandbox". The times and dates are to be determined. Please let us know by sending us an email at <a href="mailto:cte@annamaria.edu">cte@annamaria.edu</a> if you are interested by December 1, 2008.

# Calendar of Events – Sessions described on pages 8 and 9

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 WPI writing workshop 12- 1:20pm	3 Email system training 1-2 or 2-3 F115	4
5	6 WebCT Training 12-1	7	8 SWK program on prisons 11:00 - 12:15	9 WPI Clicker workshop 12- 1:20pm	10	11
12	13 Columbus Day	14 Service Learning Lunch & Learn	15	16	17	18
19	20 WebCT Training 12-1	21	22 WebCT Training 4:30 – 5:30	23	24 Last day for P/F	25
26	27 WebCT Training 12-1	28 Assessment Lunch & Learn	29 WebCT Training 4:30 – 5:30	30	31 Last day to Withdraw	

November 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Registration begins NEASC visit	4 NEASC visit JSTOR presentation at Faculty Meeting	5 Empower training 2-3:30 F115	6 Engaging Science, Advancing Learning:	7	8
9	10 WebCT Training 12-1	11 Teaching Strategies Lunch & Learn	12 WebCT Training 4:30 – 5:30	13	14 NEFDC 2008 Fall Conference	15
16	17	18	19 Teaching Strategies Lunch & Learn	20	21	22 Writing and Critical Thinking
23	24	25 Registration ends Teaching Strategies Lunch & Learn	26	27 Happy Thanksgiving	28	29
30						

December 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Last day of classes Empower training 2-3:30 F115	4 Reading Day	5 Finals Begin	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 Finals End	13

#### Lunch & Learn

**Lunch and Learns** are hour-long brown bag sessions featuring a facilitator followed by group discussion. Please join us on the dates below from 12:00-1:00 in the Faculty Dining Room. Please let us know what topics you want addressed during Spring 2009.

Topic	Date	Facilitator	Description
Service Learning	10-14	Sue Eliason	Are you doing projects in your courses externally with
			a community partner? Join us to talk about Service
			Learning and to learn more.
Assessment	10-28	Ronald	How do you know the students are learning? Are you
		Sherwin	aligning course objectives with assignments and
			assessment? Basic issues related to assessment will be
			shared.
Teaching Strategies –	11-11	Chris	Chris will discuss Learning Styles. Bring your ideas and
Team Projects		Holmes	resources to share.
Teaching Strategies –	11-19	Joanne	Joanne will discuss strategies for small group
Small Group		Jenal	discussions. Bring your ideas to share and any concerns
Discussions			to discuss.
Teaching Strategies -	11-25	Sue Eliason	Sue will discuss providing effective feedback. Bring
			your ideas to share and any concerns to discuss.

## **Information on Local Fall Conferences**

You can apply for a scholarship through CTE to attend these local conferences. The scholarship money is for registration fees only. In return for receiving a registration scholarship, you must agree to facilitate a Breakfast Brief or Lunch and Learn during Spring 2009 to discuss the conference with collegues.

Using Clickers to Engage Students and Enhance Learning
Thursday, October 9, 12-1:20pm,
WPI Campus Center Hagglund Room

Come learn about the Classroom Performance System (CPS) and how faculty at WPI are using it in their classes.

Please pre-register by Friday, October 3 by sending name, email address, and institutional affiliation to ceda@wpi.edu<mailto:ceda@wpi.edu



# The New England Faculty Development Consortium FALL CONFERENCE

"Accessing Academic Excellence: What Colleges Can Do to Promote Student Success"

> Friday, November 14, 2008 DCU Center Worcester, Massachusetts

#### **CONFERENCE AGENDA**

8:30 - 9:00 Conference Registration

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome, Introductions

9:15 - 10:30 Keynote Presentation - Dr.

Pedro Noguera

10:45 - 11:45 Session I: Workshops & Teaching Tips

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch

1:15 - 2:15 Session II: Workshops & Teaching Tips
2:30 - 3:30 Session III: Workshops & Teaching Tips
3:30 - 4:30 Wine Reception and Poster Session

For more information see:

http://www.nefdc.org/events.htm#Fall%202008%20Conference



## Biannual Conference on Writing Across a Critical Thinking Continuum

November 21-22, 2008 Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT.

The conference explores the relationship between critical and creative thinking strategies to writing processes across our curricula and disciplinary domains. This website provides complete details about the conference at: <a href="https://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1049.xml">https://www.quinnipiac.edu/x1049.xml</a>

Costs:

Full conference \$225 Saturday Only \$150

#### Saturday, November 22

8-9 a.m. Registration 9-9:15 a.m. Welcome

9:30 - 11 am: Session 1 - Redefining the Continuum Between Writing and Thinking

11:15 a.m. - 12:45 pm: Session 2 - (Re)Possessing the Continuum: Thinking & Writing in the Disciplines 1 - 2:15 pm Luncheon and Keynote Speaker "Is Critical Thinking a Liberal Art? Writing in the Disciplines and Contemporary Poetry in (as) "Higher Education" Jonathan Monroe - Cornell University 2:30 - 4 pm: Session 3- (Re)Addressing the Continuum:

Thinking/Writing Iterations 4 -5:30 p.m. Cocktail hour and discussion



#### **AAC&U** sponsors events

ENGAGING SCIENCE, ADVANCING LEARNING: General Education, Majors, and the New Global Century in Providence, Rhode Island— November 6-8, 2008 Early Registration--Through October 15, 2008

Members Individual Rate: \$400 Nonmember Individual Rate: \$515

GENERAL EDUCATION, ASSESSMENT, AND THE LEARNING STUDENTS NEED in Baltimore, Maryland –

February 26-28, 2009

Early Registration--Through February 3, 2009

Members Individual Rate: \$400 Nonmember Individual Rate: \$515

For more information see: http://www.aacu.org/