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CURRENTS

University of Southern Maine

Volume 7, Number 3

October 10, 1988

Revitalizing the Core

More than 60 faculty and students, with the support and involvement of four deans, met twice a month during spring semester to review and recommend changes in USM's Core Curriculum. Reports from the 10 task forces which undertook the review have been assembled, and a summary will soon be mailed to all faculty, full and part time, and to administrators and professional staff to be reviewed. Late



in October the Faculty Senate will sponsor an open meeting to air considerations on the Core and on the recommendations of the task forces.

"We've learned a lot about ourselves in this process," said Henry Amoroso, director of the Core Curriculum. "The faculty and students who convened to discuss the Core explored basic questions. The hard issues underlying USM's approach to the Core weren't ignored—who owns the curriculum and who should teach it. The time was right for this review and reformation, and the results are genuine, a call for more than superficial change. That's significant."

It was felt by 1987 that the concept of the Core was not being fulfilled; basic goals for our students—"mastery of basic competencies...familiarity with the content and methods of academic disciplines and an appreciation of the interconnectedness of knowledge"—were not being met. Yet it was

recognized that the Core experience was essential to students. "We found there is a deep concern for the Core among faculty and students," Amoroso said. "We've put down the myth that the Core is irrelevant." It was time, the Core Council and the Deans' Council concluded, for an assessment.

As a result, the Council now recommends that orientation sessions and ongoing training for faculty teaching the Core be established and that the natural science component be increased and a foreign language requirement be added. More than 50 specific recommendations were made, but the primary one, according to Amoroso, was "to bring together those faculty teaching Core courses regularly to discuss goals." It has been suggested that a Core House would facilitate Core faculty development by providing a meeting ground for dialogue, workshops and seminars, grant-writing and curriculum analysis. Emphasis was also placed on limiting class size to allow faculty to work more closely with students on oral and written language to develop critical thought.

Once the recommendations have been discussed in the open Senate meeting, the Core Council will reduce input from the university community to specific proposals to be submitted to the Faculty Senate, late this semester or early spring semester, for voting. The review and revitalization of the Core will have taken two years, a length of time in keeping with that of other institutions which have undertaken comprehensive reform of core programs.

"In light of what we know about other institutions, we're way ahead," Amoroso says. "We haven't been mired down in competition between disciplines, each protecting home turf."

"Next, we need to support the Core in relation to its broad purpose—it must be central to the undergraduate experience, so it must be funded and supported on that scale."

Building a Bond

Chancellor Robert L. Woodbury reported last week that in the last 20 years the people of Maine have put \$34 million into the system's physical facilities through bond issues. By comparison, we've bonded \$180 million for highways, \$160 million for pollution control and \$119 million for public schools. "All of these are important needs," said Woodbury, "but improvements to our university are long overdue."

If approved by voters on November 8, a \$36.8 million bond will fund high-priority construction projects at all seven campuses of the University of Maine System, including nearly \$9 million in improvements to USM's libraries.

To help get the message to voters, a faculty committee, chaired by Michael Hillard, assistant professor of economics, has been formed to speak before civic groups in the area. In addition, USM students are distributing campaign information at public and campus events and plan to hold a voter registration drive.

Finally, the USM Alumni Association is sponsoring a telethon to reach voters during the first week in November.

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Speakers Needed

A campus committee is now scheduling members of our faculty to speak before civic groups throughout the region on the merits of the upcoming University of Maine System bond issue.

Faculty and staff already have been keynote speakers at Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Chamber of Commerce meetings, but other speaking engagements are needed.

If you have ideas on groups that would be interested in hosting a USM speaker, please call the Media Relations Office at 780-4200 or Michael Hillard, at 780-4416.

President's Notes

In an effort that would be the envy of many institutions, a group of our faculty, students and administrators has been engaged in a rigorous examination of the aims, content, methods and effects of our Core Curriculum, established in 1982.

Earlier this month, the Higher Education Research Program, a distinguished group of leaders and policy specialists from higher education, released the first in a series of position papers contributing to a national agenda on educational reform in colleges and universities. Their statement identified three principal issues: (1) the rapidly increasing and apparently uncontrolled cost of higher education; (2) the lack of public discussion regarding what exactly constitutes good teaching; and (3) the increasing proclivity of colleges and universities to "sort out" and "sort down" the educationally and economically disadvantaged.

The preliminary findings and recommendations of USM's Core review address these three issues squarely and place the discussion of our Core firmly within the national context. They make the point clearly that reform of our Core Curriculum will entail cost, not only in terms of possible new support but also possible redirection of resources. Their recommendations challenge us as a community of learners to examine honestly and candidly both what is taught and how we teach it. And finally, the reports take note of the kind of students we are called upon to serve and urge that every effort be made to provide the right educational experience, beginning at the point of entry to USM.

Within a few days, each faculty member and administrator will receive a copy of the Report prepared by the Core Steering Committee, which summarizes the review work to date. I urge all to read this document carefully, to examine the individual task force reports, and to join me in taking full part in the open hearings scheduled during the coming months. If our attempt to ask and answer the truly difficult questions regarding the educational experience we provide is to succeed, it must enjoy the thoughtful support of all members of our university community.

Building a Bond

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ber. If you'd like to volunteer in this effort, donating an evening or more, please call Deborah Krichels at 780-4778.

Computerized Card Catalog

Poring through stacks of card catalogs to find the book you want will soon be a thing of the past at our libraries, thanks to computers designed to locate library materials immediately.

The computerized, online public access catalog—titled URSUS—actually connects all seven University



Lanier Lumbert, head of circulation services for University Library and director of this summer's volunteer effort to barcode all USM library holdings, wraps up the barcoding project as the last unlabeled volumes arrive at the circulation desk.

O'Malley Photo

of Maine System campus libraries, allowing computers to scan the more than 750,000 titles statewide and tell the user which libraries have the material. A library staff member can then send a loan request to the nearest library if the item is not available on the user's home campus.

"Before the installation of this system, it took two weeks to check each library for the availability of a book, let alone the time it took to process a loan form and actually receive it," said George R. Parks, USM's university librarian. "This is a tremendous service to students and members of the general public alike."

USM is presently equipped with 16 terminals, 10 in the Portland campus library and six in the university's Gorham library. A student or citizen can ask the computer to search for materials by author, title, subject, call

number or documentation number. For example, if a user wants to know the location of materials on child care, he or she can request a search by subject and simply type in the words, "child care." The screen then shows a total of 135 books, directories and policy manuals.

Selecting any one of those entries will give the user complete information on the publication, including locations. Later this year, the system will also tell users whether an item is still on the shelf or already in circulation.

Parks noted that plans call for some of the state's public libraries to be connected to the system. Voters approved funding for the \$2.3 million statewide system in 1986. In November, citizens will be asked to support a \$36.8 million bond issue to fund major capital improvements at each of the system's seven campuses. If approved, the money would fund an addition to our libraries, which presently do not meet the space standards set by national library associations.

Campus Notes

■ **Garrison Keillor** in a live performance sponsored by Community Programs: 7:30 p.m., Monday, November 14 at Portland City Hall Auditorium. Advanced sale of tickets for USM faculty, staff and students will be on Monday, October 17 and Tuesday, October 18 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Payson Smith Hall business office and from 4:30 to 8 p.m. in 101 Payson Smith. For free admission, volunteer as usher. Call Community Programs at 874-6500 for more information.

■ Discount tickets (\$5 off the regular ticket price of \$11 - \$13) to concerts at Portland Performing Arts Center for the USM community through a grant from USM to PPAC's 1988 Music Series:

George Russell and the Living Time Orchestra, avant garde big band, Saturday, October 15 at 8 p.m., PPAC.

Sweet Honey in the Rock and Odetta, a cappella soul and legendary folksinger, Saturday, October 29 at 9 p.m., First Parish Church.

■ Department of Biological Sciences begins the 1988 Natural History Lecture Series with **"The Naked Tide Pools of Qingdao"** by Donald Dorsey, assistant professor of biology, Friday, October 14 at 12:30 p.m. in 305 Science Building. Reception follows. Free and open to the public.

A Red Hot Season

The USM Theatre Department has announced its new season of plays, opening with one of Neil Simon's brightest comedies, "The Last of the Red Hot Lovers," beginning Friday, October 21.

"The Last of the Red Hot Lovers" was a hit of the 1969 Broadway season and was praised by New York Post critic Richard Watts as "hilarious and witty." Like many of Simon's best works, it probes human nature while delivering sparkling one-liners. The comedy follows the bungling attempts of Barney Cashman, the married, overweight and middle-aged owner of a fish store, to arrange "one last fling."

Director Thomas Power, associate professor of theatre, cast Christian Behr, a veteran of Russell Square productions, as Barney and Paula Libby, Caitlin Winn and Tamara Schmidt as the women he tries to seduce.

"The Last of the Red Hot Lovers" will play at 8 p.m. Friday, October 21 and Saturday, October 22 and Wednesday, October 26 through Saturday, October 29. There will be 5 p.m. matinee performances on Sundays, October 23 and October 30. Tickets are \$6 for the general public, \$5 for faculty/staff and senior citizens and \$3 for students.

Other performances this season are "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller, which will be directed by Minor Rootes and will run from December 2 to 11; "The Wager" by Mark Medoff, to be directed by William Steele, from March 10 to 19; and three one-act plays by Chekhov as part of this year's Convocation, to be directed by new theatre faculty Yvonne Shafer and to run from April 21 to 30. Scenery for all plays will be designed by Charles Kading and costumes will be by Susan Picinich.

For tickets for "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," call 780-5483.

Women's Place in the Canon

A hard look at the accepted body of literary masters will be presented by Lillian Robinson, feminist scholar and author, in a talk, "In the Canon's Mouth," at 4 p.m. on Friday, October 14, Room 113 of Masterton Hall, the new classroom building on our Portland Campus.

Robinson, a feminist literary critic and an authority on women writers and women and the media, has concerned herself with the exclusion of women authors from the canon of American and English literature. She will discuss the criteria by which we determine what is "Literature" and the philosophy behind canonization.

Robinson earned her Ph.D. with distinction from Columbia University in comparative literature and holds a master's in art history from New York University and a master's in English literature from Brown. She is an affiliated scholar at Stanford University's Institute for Research on Women and Gender and has taught at Columbia University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Wellesley College. A prolific writer, Robinson is a regular contributor to "Women's Review of Books" and the author of the books, "Sex, Class, and Culture," "Monstrous Regiment: The Lady Knight in Sixteenth Century Epic," "Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe" and soon to be published, "In the Canon's Mouth," "Women and Fictions," "What Television Tells," "Modern Women Writers" and "Here's Looking at You, Babe."

Her talk, sponsored by Women's Studies, is free and open to the public. For more information, call 780-4289.

Annual Alumni Awards

The USM Alumni Association honored fellow members and other civic and business leaders at the annual Alumni Luncheon during Homecoming on Saturday, October 1.

Walter Mattson, class of 1955, the late Robert R. Masterton and John M. Pulsifer, class of 1955, were named the 1988 recipients of the Community Service Award.

Masterton, chairman, president and CEO of The One Bancorp, served on the Governor's Commission on the Status of Education, on the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, and on Maine's Science and Technology Board. Masterton also played a vital role in creating the UM System's Foundation to Support Technology Education, which has been renamed in his honor. Mattson, president of the New York Times Company, is a member of the Board of Trustees of Northeastern University and chairman of the National Ad Council. Pulsifer, owner of the "Jolly John" car dealerships in Saco, is actively involved in the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the United Way of York County and the York County YMCA Building Foundation.

The Alumna of the Year award was given to Anne M. Theriault, class of 1967. Theriault, now a consultant, served as the executive director of the USM Alumni Association and director of Alumni Relations from 1969 through June, 1988. She was chairman of the first Homecoming and served on numerous university committees.

Hilltop Awards were presented to recognize service to the University and the Alumni Association. This year, five alumni received the award: Geraldine A. Day, class of 1964, a guidance counselor at Deering High School, Portland; Donald S. Dow, class of 1932, retired superintendent of schools for Hopedale, Mass. and former school business manager for Falmouth, Maine; his late wife, Nina Marsh Dow, class of 1934, received the award posthumously—she was a teacher in Gorham, Saco, and Medfield, Mass.; Alan D. Gibbons, class of 1972, manager in tax planning for Tyco Laboratories, Inc. in Exeter, New Hampshire; and Frances Hawkes Hale, class of 1952, former superintendent of schools in Pownal and Falmouth and director of special services in School Union 74 in the Damariscotta area.

OPEN HOUSES

Lewiston/Auburn College

USM's Lewiston/Auburn College invites you to an opening celebration on Sunday, October 16, from 1 to 5 p.m. at 51-55 Westminster Street, Lewiston. The program opens with greetings from trustee Harrison Richardson and remarks by Chancellor Robert Woodbury. The building will open after ribbon cutting ceremonies at 2:10, followed by tours of the building, displays, a library presentation and demonstrations in the computer lab. Information will also be available on the management and organizational studies major.

USM Admissions

An open house for prospective students will be held by USM's Admissions Office on Saturday, October 22. Events, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., include tours of the campuses, a slide show, conversations with faculty, staff and students, a student musical production, welcoming remarks by President Plante, and an introduction to the university by David Behrs, director of admissions. For more information, call the Admissions Office at 780-5215.

What We're Doing

THOMAS R. CARPER, associate professor of English, has had three recent poems, "A Guardian Tanya," "Like the Spaniards," and "Her Diamond Ring" accepted by Poetry. The poems will also appear in The Maine Scholar.

NANCY P. GREENLEAF, dean, School of Nursing, testified before the Maine Legislative Commission on Nursing and Health Care Personnel in a hearing on the nursing shortage in Augusta on September 2.

SAT N. GUPTA, assistant professor of mathematics, presented a paper he co-authored on "Parameter Estimation in Low Order Fractionally Differenced ARMA Processes," at the annual meeting of the American Statistical Association held in August.

MICHAEL S. HAMILTON, assistant professor of political science, has been awarded a grant from the Section on Natural Resources and Environmental Administration of the American Society for Public Administration to prepare and edit a collection of articles on natural resources and environmental administration.

MICHAEL HILLARD, assistant professor of economics, had his article, "An Analysis and Perspective on the IP/Jay Strike," published in the Summer 1988 issue of Maine Business Indicators.

ROBERT B. LOUDEN, associate professor of philosophy, had his essay, "On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," originally published in the American Philosophical Quarterly 21 (1984), reprinted in "Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives" (Wadsworth, 1989). The same essay was also included in "The Virtues: Contemporary Essays on Moral Character" (Wadsworth, 1987).

KATHLEEN I. MACPHERSON, associate dean, School of Nursing, was a keynote speaker at the University of Colorado School of Nursing conference on "Caring and



Pictured above at a reception in their honor on the occasion of their retirement this summer after a combined total of 84 years of service to USM, from the left: Philip C. Libby, coordinator of property management; Anita K. Graham, coordinator of business services; and Virginia M. Lewis, graduate education specialist in the College of Education. *Caswell photo*

Nursing: Explorations in the Feminist Perspective," June 18.

LORRAINE D. MASURE, director, Sanford Center, presented the address, "Education: A Societal Responsibility" to the Sanford/Springvale Kiwanis Club on August 24.

GEORGE R. PARKS, university librarian, lectured to two classes at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Science on major issues in academic librarianship and the nature of the academic library.

HENRY L. PARSONS, assistant professor of production/operations management and **PHILIP JAGOLINZER**, professor of accounting, had their article, "A Manager's Look at the Annual Report," published in the Controllers Quarterly, second quarter, 1988.

PATRICIA R. PLANTE, president, delivered papers at The American Association of State Colleges and Universities at George Mason University, Va., on June 7; at The American Association of University Admin-

istrators in Chicago on June 27; and at The Institute of Educational Management at Harvard University on July 22.

KIMBERLY J. STROM, assistant professor of social work, was recently elected to represent the New England region on the NASW's National Task Force on Decision Making into the 21st Century. Strom is also president of the Maine Chapter of the NASW.

THOMAS M. WARD, professor, School of Law, had his article, "Defining the Article Nine Security Interest: The Old Problems and A New Solution," appear in the July 1988 issue of the Maine Bar Journal.

L. KINVIN WROTH, dean, School of Law, was an organizer and moderator of a program on Canadian-American Constitutionalism presented at the annual meeting of the Conference of Chief Justices in Rockland, August 3, 1988.

MELVYN ZARR, professor, School of Law, is a member of the Executive Committee of the newly created Federal Courts Section of the Association of American Law Schools.



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