

# community

*A newsletter for the faculty and staff of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University*

## *Fall Workshop: Academic Ethos and Excellence in Liberal Arts*

prepared by Henry Smorynski, provost

The fall workshop for the community was focused on building a stronger academic ethos for our students and each other at CSB/SJU. While the responsibility for expanding and deepening our campus cultures regarding the academic will fall to students, faculty and professional staff, primarily in Student Development, it is critical that all employees support it.

In one sense we are all teachers. We all need to encourage and support students in owning their education, taking responsibility for it and fully involving themselves in academic, cultural and intellectual opportunities. Each of us will have teachable moments with student workers, athletes, lab assistants, students seeking office services, and other student experiences. In those natural settings of every day conversation, we can ask about their studies, ideas they are examining and issues they are pondering. If we do, we will be building academic ethos. At every turn, are we supporting our students in their identification of choices, reflection on choices and value of choices? Do we pause to give praise for well thought out and valued choices that mean so much to our students? If we do, we will be building academic ethos. Do we share with our students our vocational choices, intellectual struggles and ethical challenges? If we do, we will be building academic ethos.



**Annette Atkins, professor of history, opened a panel discussion on "Academic Ethos and Student Learning" during the fall workshop. Other panelists included Bill Lamberts, associate professor of biology; Katie Johnson, associate professor of communication; Bethany Heinzen, CSB senior; and Fr. Timothy Backous, SJU athletic director.**

Over the last several years, the community has been engaged more intensely and intimately in the Lilly vocation projects. Often, during these discussions, members of the community have remarked about how little time we have for conversation and reflection on the campuses. Similar threads of a deep-seated need for more collegial conversations have been evident in faculty sessions both within and apart from the Lilly projects. There is a thirst for conversation and building academic and intellectual ethos both for our students and for one another that is evident on the campuses. Daily, building academic ethos and making it flourish more prominently is exactly what the highest quality liberal arts institutions do for all members of their communities — students, faculty, staff and administration. Ultimately, ethos is one of the most

important defining characteristics of excellence in a liberal arts undergraduate experience. Some would define the essence of a quality liberal arts education as having good conversations about things that really matter.

Just as all of us are necessary to have an effective high  
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retention rate, all of us are responsible for making vital contributions to building academic ethos. While our students come to CSB/SJU for many reasons, the lifetime consequences of their education will be dependent upon their campus engagement and learning from each other and all members of our community. In the Benedictine practice of hospitality, we need to start conversations, not wait on our students. In the Benedictine spirit of humility, we need to share from our hearts, experiences and personal gifts on a daily basis in all our student contacts. Our students will benefit from our engagement in their learning and reflections on their experiences.

The workshop identified some very common conversational threads taking place on highest quality liberal arts campuses that we might profitably engage in with students and each other. This engagement will require some risk-taking on our parts and the parts of our students. To be safe in our approaches to conversation is not consistent with the liberal arts education. Such behavior will not take CSB/SJU into the company of the strongest liberal arts institutions. Our Benedictine way is to live and learn in community. As an academic community we all have to stretch ourselves to make the academic more present on a 24-7 basis. The academic must become as present and natural for our students as the social and athletic. We can be a place defined by attributes of fun, friendly and academic. If we want to achieve the same high quality results we have in the area of student retention, we must all work together to make the academic more common, more valued and more pervasive in students' lives, both within and outside of the classroom environment. To arrive at a different place tomorrow, we must find time to build academic ethos today.

## *Fall Workshop Generates Ideas to Strengthen Academic Ethos*

prepared by Glenda Isaacs Burgeson, Community editor  
Communication and Marketing Services

Brainstorming efforts at the fall workshop breakout sessions produced several common themes as participants discussed ways to strengthen the academic ethos on the two campuses.

The breakout sessions included a variety of perspectives for the eight separate group discussions: Internationalizing and Globalizing Our Understandings of the World; Making the Arts and Aesthetics a Larger Part of Our World View; Appreciating the Multi-cultural and Multi-ethnic American Society; Creating Communities of Intellectual Conversation and Dialogue; Bringing Vocation and Discernment into Our Daily Living Choices; Discovery and Inquiry of Nature; Seeking Meaningful and Powerful Life Enhancing Consequences from Our Professions; Citizenship and Public Engagement in Improving Our Civic Society.

A comment made by S. Eva Hooker during the plenary session about a lack of common social spaces in academic buildings triggered discussion among several groups with participants agreeing that the lack of gathering spaces in some academic areas may hinder student interaction.

Some participants also favored setting aside a common time to schedule community-wide activities. Some suggested a master calendar would help people take full advantage of the many events on the two campuses.

Several ideas focused on raising the academic bar. Suggestions included the need to address grade inflation, set clear expectations of academic standards, push students to work harder, recognize academic talent, require students to work together outside of class, assign students to attend campus lectures, and assign students to discuss classroom topics with students not in their classes.

Several groups discussed the importance of bringing a more systematic and intentional approach to existing programs. For example, study abroad, ranked by many as a strong point, could be a more effective learning experience. A forum through which students returning from study abroad could discuss their experiences would provide a structured way for students to reflect on their personal growth and on their experience as the "other" in a different culture. Peer education and the men's spirituality groups could serve as models for building self-awareness within a community of learners. Examples of programs and opportunities that foster rapport and a more intense learning experience included service learning, experiential learning, informal book discussion groups, departmental seminar series, learning communities, Alternative Spring Break and faculty/student research projects and forums.

Finally, discussions about creating an atmosphere where learning is valued included the need to prioritize academic endeavors and activities (i.e. let something go to make room for new responsibilities), and the role of staff and administrators, in collaboration with faculty, in building an intellectual ethos.

These ideas, along with other comments and suggestions were forwarded to the provost's office for consideration.

## Asian Studies Program to Have Visiting Lecturer

The Asian Studies Program is pleased to announce that Masaichiro Nashiro, vice chairman of the board and vice principal of Okinawa Shogaku High School, will serve as visiting lecturer in the Asian Studies Program during the 2004-05 and 2005-06 academic years. He will teach a two-credit course titled "Japanese Cultural Conversations" for advanced Japanese language students wanting to broaden their ability to address, in Japanese, current events and other issues relevant to Japan and its global outreach. He will also offer lectures in Richard Bohr's course, "Modern Japan, 1868-Present" (History 319).

According to Bohr, director of Asian studies, Nashiro's presence in our community during the next two years is a major opportunity to enhance the Asian studies curriculum and to strengthen our institutional bridges to Asia. Okinawa Shogaku High School is already a significant academic partner in professor of history Dave Bennetts's annual summer ESL camps at SJU for Japanese high school students. CSB/SJU already sends a number of graduates to teach in Okinawa and other parts of Japan each year. Nashiro will help CSB/SJU broaden these relationships to Japan and Asia. While living with his wife and three children on the SJU campus, Nashiro, who holds a master's degree in economics from Meiji University in Tokyo, will pursue his doctorate in education at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

## Benedict and Dorothy Gorecki Give \$2.2 Million to CSB

Benedict and Dorothy Gorecki, owners of Gorecki Manufacturing, Inc. in Milaca, Minn., have announced a \$2.2 million gift to CSB for the expansion of the Benedicta Arts Center (BAC). The College will honor the Goreckis generosity by naming the BAC theater and the

west lobby for them.

The BAC, built in 1964, has long been considered one of the finest performance venues in the upper Midwest. In addition to the Gorecki Theater and Lobby, the much needed renovation of this award-winning arts facility will include enhanced rehearsal and office space, as well as climate control and accessibility modernizations.

"We are privileged to count people like the Goreckis among our friends," said CSB President MaryAnn Baenninger. "Their generous contribution to the expansion of the Benedicta Arts Center is significant in making this long sought-after possibility a reality."

Ben and Dorothy Gorecki are the president and secretary/treasurer of Gorecki Manufacturing, Inc., a company that specializes in the manufacture of overhead projectors, traffic signals and controls, digital wall displays and other hard goods and chemicals for such Fortune 500 companies as 3M and Dow Chemical. The company employs 75 workers in facilities in Milaca, Pierz and Foley, Minn.

In 2003, the Goreckis made a

\$250,000 gift to the fine arts endowment at CSB, in appreciation for the education their granddaughter, Carrie Gorecki '03, had received at the College, "and for the College of Saint Benedict fine arts program's contribution to helping the community celebrate beauty, excellence and spirituality through the arts," the Goreckis said.

This most recent generous gift from the Gorecki family will enhance the learning spaces for the arts at the College and enable CSB and the BAC to continue to bring world-class performances by national and international artists to students and the wider community.

"Having lived for many years an hour away from a major city, I understand intimately the value of having such a world class arts center right here at the heart of our campus and our community," Baenninger added. "The Benedicta Arts Center brings quality art and entertainment close to home and we can thank the Goreckis for making sure this will continue for many years to come."

## *Theresa Schumacher, OSB, Elected to the American Benedictine Academy*

submitted by Katie Perry, publicist, Saint Benedict's Monastery

The American Benedictine Academy (ABA) recently elected Sister Theresa Schumacher of Saint Benedict's Monastery as president-elect for a six-year term. The Academy also elected Simeon Thole, OSB, of Saint John's Abbey to the ABA Board of Directors for a two-year term. Richard Oliver, OSB, of Saint John's Abbey moved into the president position of ABA for the next two years. The ABA meeting was held Aug. 12-15, at Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph.

Formed in 1947, the ABA is a national gathering of monastics and oblates (lay associates) who strive to further Benedictine life and values in their daily lives.

For more information, call 363-7100 or visit [www.sbm.osb.org](http://www.sbm.osb.org)

## Michael Dady and Kristi Skordahl Pledge \$1 Million to SJU

SJU alumnus and former chair of the University's Board of Regents Michael Dady and his wife Kristi Skordahl recently pledged \$1 million to establish an endowed scholarship fund for the benefit of current and future generations of SJU students.

The Michael Dady and Kristi Skordahl Leadership Scholarship will be given to students who have demonstrated, through good works, social justice activities or other means, strong leadership potential in service to others, particularly the less fortunate.

"I have been influenced to make this gift to Saint John's by the generosity of others," remarked Michael Dady '71. "As we read of Saint John's efforts to raise endowment funds to strengthen its future, and as we learned of the wonderful gifts from so many of our Saint John's friends to this important effort, my wife Kristi and I decided that it was time for us to do what we could to help Saint John's as well.

"I would likely not have been able to attend Saint John's without the scholarship help I received," noted Dady. "My experience as a member of the Saint John's community, in different ways, since 1967, has been life-changing. My mentors at Saint John's convinced a young man who thought he was going to Saint John's to major in basketball, that he had been given the gifts to be a serious student, for life, if he would just use those gifts.

"For all this and more, I know I have a debt to Saint John's I can never repay. Our commitment to help Saint John's do one thing that it has been doing so well for so long — nurture students to be leaders in service to others — seems to us to be an appropriate investment in Saint John's and in the students it will be serving for years to come."

"Michael is a born leader — from his

boyhood days on a South Dakota reservation to his athletic and academic pursuits at Saint John's, to his current leadership roles in the legal profession and in the non-profit community," commented Br. Dietrich Reinhart, SJU president. "It is only natural that he and Kristi would establish a scholarship to support the education and development of young men destined to do great things. We are profoundly grateful for this remarkable gift from a generous, kind-hearted couple with deep affection for Saint John's."

Dady grew up in South Dakota and graduated from Sisseton High School. He enrolled at SJU and graduated in 1971 with a degree in government. He obtained his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1975.

Skordahl grew up in Edina, Minn., and graduated from the University of Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Law School. She practiced law with Henson & Efron in Minneapolis until retiring in 2001. She now devotes her time to charitable work and to managing the couple's ranch in northeastern South Dakota.

They have been particularly active in supporting children's charities. Dady for-

merly served on the Board of Children's HeartLink. Presently, he and Skordahl volunteer for Catholic Charities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, where Dady is also the chair-elect of the board of directors.

## Saint John's Hosts 'A Walk Through Time'

"A Walk Through Time," a self-guided tour of the history of the Earth, will be featured on the SJU campus from Sept. 28 through Oct. 8. The one-mile course around the campus features a 4.6 billion-year timeline to explain significant developments of the Earth's history.

World famous dinosaur expert Robert Bakker will also be on hand to present "Bones, Bible and Creation: The intertwined history of fossil skeletons and Genesis," at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 29, in the Stephen B. Humphrey Theater on the SJU campus. Bakker will also present "Tyrannosaurus Rex: An Insider's view of Dinosaurs" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 1, in the Sexton Arena, Warner Palaestra on the SJU campus.

The lectures are free and open to the public. For more information, call 363-3163 or e-mail [arboretum@csbsju.edu](mailto:arboretum@csbsju.edu).

## *Johnson to Direct Internships*

Katherine Johnson, associate professor of communication, was recently named the interim director of internships at CSB/SJU. This is a joint college appointment aimed at serving the for-credit internship needs of students. In making the announcement, Provost Henry Smorynski said, "Johnson's depth of thinking about the value of curricular based experiential learning and her strong determination to strengthen the office's ties to our academic departments makes her an excellent choice for this position.

Johnson replaces Jill Farry, who is retiring at the end of this year. "Farry established many of the fundamental structures of the academic internship office and has helped to place an untold number of students on the path to successful careers," Smorynski said.

"The CSB/SJU community wishes Farry well as she begins a new chapter of her life."

## Faculty/Staff news

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This July, **Sharmistha Self**, assistant professor of economics, presented a paper titled "Agricultural Development, State Effectiveness and Long-Run Economic Development" with Richard Grabowski in Vancouver at the Western Economic Association meeting. In November, she will also be presenting "Economic Development, Convergence, and Agricultural Preconditions" with Grabowski at the Southern Economic Association meetings in New Orleans. In January, Self will present the paper "Do Inter-caste Marriages Necessarily Lower Dowries?" at the annual American Economics Association meeting in Philadelphia.

Self also had three papers accepted for publication this summer. One paper, co-authored by Shawna Grosskopf, is titled "Factor Accumulation or TFP? A Reassessment of Growth in South East Asia." It will be published in a forthcoming edition of *Pacific Economic Review*. The second paper, "Gender, Vocational Education, and Economic Development: The Japanese Experience," was co-authored by Grabowski and will be featured in an upcoming edition of *Review of Applied Economics*. A third paper titled "What Makes Motherhood So Expensive? The Role of Social Expectations, Interdependence and Coordination Failure" will be published in a future edition of *Journal of Socio Economics*.

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**Dr. Shang Quanyu**, CSB/SJU Visiting Scholar (Fall 2000), SJU Institute of Ecumenical and Cultural Studies Fellow (2002-03), and professor of history at Zhanjiang Normal College, China, was awarded a prestigious ASIA Fellows Award, funded by the Ford Foundation, to pursue research on the relationship between India's great statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru, and China at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Dehli, India during the

2004-05 academic year. Shang's research while at SJU will provide a useful foundation for this project.

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**Richard Bohr**, professor of history and director of Asian studies, became the first American to be named Honorary Professor by Zhanjiang Normal College, in southwestern Guangdong province, China, while leading CSB/SJU's South China study tour to that campus last June. According to the citation, this honor is intended to recognize Bohr's lifetime of scholarship on and "bridge-building" efforts to promote Sino-U.S. relations.

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SJU math majors **Nicholas McClure** and **Robert Willenbring** received awards in August at the national competition at Mathfest, the summer meetings of the

Mathematical Association of America. Their talks were based on their summer research. Willenbring's talk was "Combinatorial Representations of RNA Secondary Structures." His advisor is **Jennifer Galovich**, associate professor of mathematics. McClure's talk was "A Study of Dispersal Models." His advisors are **Charles Rodell**, professor of biology, and **Tom Sibley**, professor of mathematics.

## In the Media

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**James H. Read**, professor of political science, gave a speech titled "Hamilton and Liberty" and participated in a panel discussion that aired on C-Span on July 4, 2004. The original speech and panel were part of a public symposium on Alexander Hamilton held at the New York Historical Society on Jan. 31.

## *The Welcome Mat:*

We welcome the following to the CSB/SJU community:

Al Christenson, Admission

J.J. Trotta, Admission

Mary Kathryn Bauer, Alumnae Relations

Martha Hise, Nursing

Heidi Hilleson, Residential Life

Theresa Eslinger, Residential Life

Sarah Hansen, Admission Office

## *Farewell to Friends:*

Tara Tollefson, Institutional Advancement

Renee Kuznia-Miller, Admission

Jennifer Theis, CSB Development

Sue Guggenberger, Food Service

Harumi Nelson, Economics

Becky Rawe, CSB Student Development

Melanie Wiener, Food Service

Joel Baggenstoss, Food Service

Joann Goodrie, Nursing

Betty Zollner, Registrar

Sara Rothenberger, Residential Life

Michelle Overtoom, Residential Life

Diane Millis, Theological Exploration

Angie Schmidt, Admission

Tim Foley, Admission

Michele Fjellman, Accounting

Denese Rigby, Theology

Larry Litterest, Economics

Jean Sperl, Nursing

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**Deadline** for October issue is September 24.  
To share your information and story ideas, simply  
e-mail them directly to Community at: [community@csbsju.edu](mailto:community@csbsju.edu).

## Happy New Year!

prepared by Janet Anderson Reagan, CSB Health at Work, and Lori Klapperich, OSB Health at Work

Working at an institution of higher education gives us the opportunity to have two new beginnings every year: one in January as the calendar year gets started, and one in the fall when school starts. We encourage you to use this new start of the year to make positive choices and positive changes in your life — perhaps rekindling some of those new year resolutions that may have fallen by the wayside!

The CSB and OSB Health at Work (HAW) committees have combined some of our efforts into a new program which can help you make positive choices in your life that can have lifelong impact. The Wellness Journey is designed to motivate you with goals, incentives and support, yet provide you with a minimal amount of structure so you can self-direct your activities. The Wellness Journey focuses on physical activity and nutrition with prevention/wellness at the core, and is designed to reward you for meeting your goals — for making positive choices. You set your goal for the amount of physical activity and how many fruits and vegetables you eat every day. If you meet a minimal goal set by HAW, you get your name put into a drawing for prizes. There is no entry fee to participate, and you can sign up to participate at any time on the HAW Web site. We have an online registration form at <http://www.csbsju.edu/haw/>. You can sign up anytime throughout the year, but we hope you take the opportunity now to start the “new year” off with healthier choices.

HAW will also have monthly wellness parties on both campuses with health-related topics that anyone can sign up on our Web site to attend. Each month we'll have a short program on the theme, and it will also be a time to connect with others who are interested in that particular topic. Each program will be offered on each campus to make it more convenient for employees (second Tuesday at SJU and third Tuesday at CSB) and at different times throughout the day. Each HAW group will also have programs (e.g. brown bag lunch, exercise class, etc.) throughout the month on the themes below:

October — Trying a new type of exercise

November — The Diet Craze — what is out there, what is healthy and what is not.

December — Healthy Holiday Baking

January — Relaxation

February — Diabetes Awareness/  
Prevention

March — Organic Foods/Whole Foods

April — Spirituality/Meditation

May — Ending Celebration

We hope that you will take advantage of all the opportunities offered to you through HAW. Check out the Web site for current programs and offerings, or to sign up for the Wellness Journey or wellness parties. The address is <http://www.csbsju.edu/haw/>.

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*Editor's note: Each month, the Healthy Learning Community and the Partners for Healthy Learning promote a health theme to the CSB and SJU campuses. These groups are involved in the promotion of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, occupational and spiritual health. To learn more about the Healthy Learning Community and the Partners for Healthy Learning, please visit the Web site at <http://www.csbsju.edu/extending/projects.htm>*