Welcome back to another academic year!

I have had a great time the past couple of months, joining the Division of Liberal Arts and getting to know you. Taking on a new Dean’s position is very much the stereotypical experience of “drinking through a fire hose,” especially given the size of NOVA and the bureaucratic tendencies of the Commonwealth, but it’s been a great experience so far. I am indebted to Duncan Tebow for helping me throughout August as I learned the ropes, and I’m proud of the reception that the Division held for him and Betsy to celebrate their retirement. (Special thanks to Nan Peck and Ann Wertman for their efforts!) Our great staff, particularly Linda, Jeff, and Nancy in CM and Susan in CN, have repeatedly pointed me in the right direction as I navigate a jungle of forms, deadlines, and regulations.

We are here for the 12,000+ students who enroll in the Division every semester. I’ve sat in on classes and have spoken with students, and I’m impressed by their motivation, desire for success, and engagement in the learning process. Of course we need to keep working at pulling up some students to level of engagement shown by their most skilled peers, but we give students everything they need to improve and succeed.

continued page 10
Meet the

Teaching at Many VCCS Colleges at the Same Time Through the SSDL

Donald Gregory

We are now in the third academic year of the VCCS’s Shared Services Distance Learning (SSDL) program, one of the chancellor’s “re-engineering” initiatives. Through this program, NOVA partners with other colleges in the VCCS to make our online courses available to their students. As of this fall, 14 of the 23 VCCS colleges (counting NOVA) are partnering in the program, enrolling a total of 1,223 students. The program is administered through ELI, and Inez Farrell is the Director of Statewide Delivery.

The SSDL is a win-win for the colleges, students, and faculty. For the colleges, the business agreements involving registration, tuition, student services, etc., were coordinated at the level of the presidents and VCCS staff. For students, many more online courses are now available to them without registering at a different college and transferring credits. This fall, for example, my online PHI 220 (Ethics) course has students from Thomas Nelson and Eastern Shore Community Colleges in the same section with my NOVA students. These students registered through their own colleges where the course was listed in their schedule, and grades will be entered directly on their student records there. An advantage for faculty is that the SSDL students appear on the same Blackboard rosters and have all the same course requirements and expectations as our NOVA students. They participate in the same discussion forums, take the same exams, and are in every way equal members of the class. Another advantage for faculty is that low-enrollment courses have a better chance of making if they are available to a wider population of students.

There are, of course, some differences in the way the SSDL and regular NOVA students are handled. Each of the partner colleges has an SSDL liaison who makes sure that SSDL students are aware of any special policies or requirements which might be unique to their college testing centers.    continued page 3

Suzanne Neff is a native of Jacksonville, Florida and has been living in Virginia for the past five years. She holds a B.A. in Theatre and Communication Studies from Trevecca Nazarene University and a M.A. in Communication Arts from The University of West Florida. She has been teaching Communication Studies for over 17 years at various colleges and universities in Mississippi, Washington and North Carolina. Her husband recently retired from the U.S. Marine Corps and they have two children Sydney, a college freshman at James Madison University and Sam, a sophomore in high school.
For example, SSDL students are required to take proctored exams as are all ELI students (some are surprised to hear this), but they normally take them at their own college’s testing centers. While all grades during the semester are entered on Blackboard for SSDL and NOVA students alike, final grade entry for SSDL students must be done on their own college’s Student Information System. Faculty are given access to these rosters through NovaConnect. I find this to be a simple matter, as long as I take a few minutes at the beginning of each term to enter each student’s college in a special Blackboard column which I create for this purpose. Once this is done, I can use the sorting function of Blackboard’s gradebook to list my students by college when I enter final grades.

Several Liberal Arts Division faculty besides myself are teaching SSDL courses this semester, including Mary Gregory, Tim Clewell, Thomas Morra, Charles Poland, Giulio Porta, Jennifer Rainey, and Rafayel Seyranyan (apologies to any others I may have missed).

The SSDL is, historically, the second iteration of a statewide offering of distance education courses. Back in the early 1990’s I served on a VCCS committee, chaired by Steve Sachs, which created something called VDEN, the Virginia Distance Education Network. VDEN functioned successfully for several years, even though “distance education” in those days referred primarily to telecourses offered via cable television and rented videotapes, with paper-based study materials and assignments sent back and forth through the mail. Even then, we had proctored exams (ELI has always had them since its inception in the 1970’s), but eventually the hefty logistical arrangements (load-sharing between colleges, faculty contracts, multiple rosters, etc.) brought the program to an end. This time, mercifully, I have no administrative role, but as a faculty member teaching in the program I am enthusiastic about the opportunity it brings to students around the state. I’m looking forward to its continuation and growth.

Jennifer Winters is in the history department, where she teaches Western Civilization. She recently received her Ph.D. from the University of St Andrews, following the successful completion of her thesis entitled "The English Provincial Book Trade: Booksellers' Stock-lists, 1530-1640". Her research interests include book history, British history, and religious history of the early modern world.
NOVA bid goodbye to two eminent professors, Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Tebow and Mr. Duncan Tebow, both professors of art. Each has been with NOVA for over 40 years and has served in many leadership positions with the College. Betsy’s tenure includes publishing, giving lectures in local art galleries, working with Joan Mondale during the Carter administration, setting up the Verizon Art Gallery in the CE Cultural Center.

A man of many hats, Duncan has served in nearly every administrative position on the campus including many stents as dean of the Communications and Humanities Division, the Language and Literature Division, Business and Public Services Division, and most recently, the Liberal Arts Division. When Duncan wasn’t serving as a dean, he was assistant dean for several programs.

A retirement celebration took place on the Annandale Campus on September 12th. Speakers included Provost Barbara Saperstone; Dr. Gladys Watkins (professor emeritus); Mr. Joseph Pincus (director the Annandale Symphony); Dr. Donald Gregory, professor of philosophy; and Betsy and Duncan Tebow. Your generous contributions enabled us to give Betsy a gift certificate for an iPad. Duncan was given gift certificates for the Arena Stage, La Ferme Restaurant, and Amazon.

Colleagues are preparing paperwork to further honor Betsy and Duncan. When these requests have been approved, we’ll keep you posted.

~Nan Peck
Jennifer Sayasithsena, Assistant Professor of Political Science, is collaborating with colleagues at the Alexandria Campus’ Institute for Public Service to organize their annual Post Election Conference. The conference, being held on November 7th, will feature three panel presentations on the implications of the 2013 election on the local, state and national political landscape. Panel members will include prominent Washington area political scientists, journalists and current and former elected officials from Virginia. You are encouraged to attend one or more of the panels. A complimentary lunch will be served to all faculty in attendance. This is an excellent extra credit opportunity for students. If you choose this option, sign in sheets can be made available to track student attendance. Please contact Jennifer Sayasithsena with any questions.
St. Catherine’s Church in Honfleur, France, where the crew of Hope went to pray before their journey

In 1570, a twenty-year-old French barber named Marin Cornu boarded a ship called Hope, an appropriate title for a man seeking to escape sectarian bloodshed and start a new life. Yet this journey was fraught with danger. The mission: sail to Panama and rob the silver shipments coming from Peru. As the pirates paddled up the Chagres River, their guide (a captured African slave) escaped, abandoning them in the wilderness as a Spanish fleet closed in. Cornu and two dozen companions got away on a makeshift galley and traveled along the coast of Central America looking for a seaworthy vessel and provisions to take them back to France. When they reached Yucatan, they assaulted a few ships and raided several Maya villages. Spanish soldiers eventually caught up with them on Cozumel Island, killing all but six. The survivors, including Cornu, were sold into slavery.

A year later, the Inquisition was established in Mexico City with a mandate from the king of Spain to eradicate Protestantism in the New World before it could take root. Hailing from Huguenot-infested Normandy, the Frenchmen in Yucatan were prime suspects. Cornu was transferred to the secret prison of the Holy Office, where he would spend the last two years of his life.

I first encountered the transcript from his trial more than a decade ago, when I was an undergraduate working on my senior thesis. In graduate school, I shelved it in favor of more esoteric research on Spanish political theology. Looking for a new direction (and a larger audience), I revisited the case about three years ago and wrote a draft of a book. This past summer, I decided to do some on-site research in Mexico and France. In June, I flew to Mexico City and spent a week at the Archivo General de la Nación, a former prison (closed in the 1970s) that houses most of the Inquisition records. Then I traveled to Cancún and spent a week retracing the steps of Cornu and his companions from Cozumel to the colonial cities of Valladolid and Mérida, culminating in a drive through the rainforest to a remote, impoverished village named Sisal, on whose pristine beaches the corsairs landed. (In case you are wondering, I did not make up this story just so I could go on vacation!) In July, I headed to Rouen, Normandy (Cornu’s birthplace) to find related information in the departmental archives. The trip ended in Honfleur, a small port near the mouth of the Seine where the ship called Hope embarked 443 years ago.

~Nick Bomba
Greetings to all from sunny Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina (or BiH), the heart shaped country in the Western Balkans. (In the local language, “I” means and.)

I arrived here on September 12, crossing through the “and” bridge, which separates Bosnia from Herzegovina. BiH is actually made up of two entities, Bosnia and Herzegovina and The Republic Srpska, (RS) as a result of the Dayton Peace Accords. Both entities have different governmental structures and money: the RS is centralized, while BiH is decentralized. To complicate things more, each canton in BiH has its own structure, often depending on the ethnic make-up here. The three majority ethnic groups are Bosnians, Serbians, and Croatians, with about 17 other minor ethnic groups, including the Roma. Each has a different language, and so one refers to the language as the Your language or the Local language. The differences are not great, but language is culture.

My assignment is to teach American culture at the University of Mostar. Mostar is a very complex place; here are two separate universities for the Croats and the Bosniaks. Schools are separate, economies are separate, and even the phone companies are separate. I am teaching at a Croatian University, but living on the Bosniak side. So, I have sense of both cultures.

Apart from the political divisions, people in BiH are all welcoming hosts. My hotel owner brought me a tray of Bosnian coffee and a sweet each day. Bosnian coffee is what you might call Turkish coffee. One small cup is as potent as three Starbucks Espressos. Sadly, the official unemployment rate is about 46%; many people spend a lot of time smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee in one of many coffee shops. Only the grocery stores seem to be non-smoking zones. But you adapt. At least, the produce is local and organic. You have never eaten a tomato until you have eaten one from BiH!

Mostar is still full of ruins from the Bosnian War, and just last year, a cinema opened. There is no library, which was destroyed in the war. The universities have no real library. The Fulbright program provided me with funds to buy books to help their American Studies program, but the Bosniak university faculty told me that they don’t even have heat in the winter, much less books. So, Mostar has great weather, and difficult politics!

So far, without even teaching, I have learned so much, and met so many wonderful people. Please feel free to contact me at agilley@nvcc.edu if you have questions, comments or want more information about the Fulbright program, You can also read my blog at: http://amygilley35.wordpress.com/

~ Amy Gilley

Welcome To Mostar
There is a movement afoot to create something new and exciting at NOVA! "STEAM," an innovative educational process that involves the intersection of the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and the Arts/Humanities disciplines (Drawing, Painting, Music, Dance, Photography, Film, Theater, etc.), is taking hold in colleges and universities across the United States, and NOVA has jumped on board with a project that is gaining steam! During the second eight-week session of the fall 2013 semester, seven students are enrolled in “The Creative Mind,” a VCCS-funded Supervised Study 299 course offered through CETL. Each student, as a result of word-of-mouth and poster/flyer marketing, registered for this pilot STEAM course during the first eight weeks of the semester, and each is part of a three person team that includes two faculty mentors (one STEM mentor and one Arts mentor). Each team is working on a STEAM project of the student’s choosing, and the seven projects will be displayed and discussed in a STEAM ‘Exhibition” at the end of the semester. The main purpose of the pilot STEAM project is to expose more faculty and students to the STEAM concept, and to help it grow at NOVA.

I have been interested in STEAM issues for a very long time, and my 2001 dissertation explored the role of culture in promoting cardiovascular health in diverse communities. Quite naturally, I was more than ready to join the NOVA movement in October 2012 when I attended Art Professor Rebecca Kamen’s (AL) VCCS sponsored symposium, “Invigorating STEM Education through Art and Creativity” on the AL Campus. Rebecca followed that presentation with a Convocation talk to the entire NOVA community in January 2013: several more faculty expressed interest in STEAM, and the CETL STEAM Faculty Learning Community (FLC) was formed in February 2013.

Since February, the “STEAM TEAM” FLC has been actively involved in reaching out to NOVA students and faculty, and we have made connections with other local and national organizations that share our interests. For example, in August, four team members traveled to Santa Clara University (CA) to participate in the SENCER (Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibilities) Summer Institute, and we are also involved in local SENCER activities. In September, several of us attended SENCER’s Chesapeake Bay Regional Meeting at George Mason University's Smithsonian Mason Conservation School in Front Royal, VA (the baby cheetahs were adorable, but we kept our distance because the “Mama Cheetah” was very close by!). We are also members of Mason's STEAM Table, a new collaborative effort between schools, non-profit organizations, government officials, and others who are interested in the connection between science and art. It feels good to be a part of a growing movement!

After spending 35 years at the AL campus, Rebecca Kamen retired this year to devote her efforts to promoting STEAM full time across the country, and I want to thank her for getting this movement started at NOVA. The rest of us are still here and working to continue her efforts, and we would love to see more faculty involved. So, if you have an interest, or if you would like more information, please feel free to contact me. One of the great things about working on anything innovative is that there are endless possibilities for creativity. Be sure to look for more information on the STEAM Exhibition at the end of the semester and join us to see what our pioneering students and their faculty mentors are doing. Who knows? You might be inspired to produce ideas of your own!

~Beverly Pittman
What is your favorite work of art?
Murals by Diego Rivera

Who makes your favorite Dessert?
I do!---Pineapple Upside Down Cake

What is the strangest student excuse you’ve ever received?
“My girlfriend became pregnant because of Spanish.”

What is the last movie you watched?
Motorcycle Diaries

How many keys do you have on your ring?
10 keys reflecting more than 4 decades of access to places and things

Meet Your Colleague: Alicia de la Torre Falzon
Acting Assistant Dean, Art & Music

Around the Division

Ruma Salhi, History, serves on the editorial board of Oxford University Press Higher Education Group, and has reviewed new and upcoming textbooks in the History of Western Civilization.

Dagmar Hasalova-White, Music adjunct and voice instructor, is active in SVU Zpravy, the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences. This Fall she presented two talks, “The Czech Nation and its Armies in Warfare: Victories, Defeat, and Nation Building” and “The Czech and Slovak Presence at the Metropolitan Opera” at 2013 SVU regional conference in Seattle.

Noah Cincinnati is presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the American Society for Environmental History in San Francisco. The paper is entitled, “Animal Traffic: The Regulation of Illicit Hunting and Collecting Overseas, 1900-1934.” He is part of a panel that will be exploring the historical discourses concerning the captivity of animals in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America.
WHAT WE’RE READING

Need a book idea? Check out what your colleagues around the division are reading and get inspired!

I’ve been reading Dr. Sleep (2013), the new Stephen King novel that is a sequel to "The Shining." It’s really interesting because the cook who teaches Danny about shining is still alive. Also, in this book, it says that his father died in a boiler explosion. In the movie, the cook died and the father froze to death. Disclaimer: I’m only on chapter 4, and I never actually read "The Shining," BUT it is probably one of my favorite films!

~ Melissa Chabot, Communication Studies

Currently, I am reading Christopher Parker and Matt Barreto, Change They Can’t Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America (2013) Parker and Barreto demonstrate that we must understand the Tea Party within the historical context of other reactionary conservative movements, such as the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the John Birch Society of the late 1950s. Like these movements, the Tea Party is attempting to conserve a perceived way of life that they believe is under existential threat in a changing country. Kruse reveals how Southern patterns of white flight during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s were wrapped up in broader social and political revolts against government activism, taxation, and desegregation.

~ Noah Cincinnati, History

Got items?

Do you have something you’d like to see printed in the LA Times? This newsletter is printed once a semester and the spring edition will be available in March 2014. Please send any articles, accomplishments, photos, upcoming events, and general blurbs about how talented you are to Jennifer Rainey (jrainey@nvcc.edu) for inclusion. Thanks to all of you who contributed to this edition – we appreciate you!