Conference Recognizes Oxford’s Excellence in Teaching

This fall, Oxford College will host a conference entitled “Cross-disciplinary Inquiries into the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” in cooperation with the Carnegie Foundation, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), and the Pew Charitable Trusts. This conference is the first of its kind at Oxford, part of the college’s ongoing effort to assume a position in the vanguard of the movement to improve the quality of student learning and raise the status of teaching.

The conference brings together a group of scholars—including Oxford faculty and Carnegie Fellows from other institutions around the country—involved in an emerging academic discipline called the “Scholarship of Teaching.” Scholarship of Teaching explores pedagogical approaches, assesses the effectiveness of these approaches in a systematic way, and encourages information sharing among faculty at different institutions. As Associate Professor of English Gretchen Schulz says, “It organizes and publicizes an activity that faculty who are caring teachers have been engaged in all along.”

Faculty are also gaining financial support and recognition for their efforts in this area. The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) has been a major source of such support. When Carnegie invited institutions to participate in CASTL, Oxford responded with gusto. Oxford’s accomplishments in this new scholarly discipline are numerous and wide-ranging. The Scholarship of Teaching initiatives coalesced in 1999, when Kent Linville, dean of Academic Affairs, created the Advisory Council on Teaching (ACT). Its faculty and staff members describe ACT as the “infrastructure” that allows for the coordination of activities undertaken by five task forces addressing issues in teaching.

Faculty and staff now meet regularly for “Campus Conversations” to define and explore pedagogical issues on campus. In 2001 ideas materialized into the “Program of Teaching Excellence and Scholarship,” a year-long program that included an Excellence in Teaching series with guest speakers of special expertise, teams of faculty and students who met regularly in pursuit of Scholarship of Teaching projects, and a Discussion Series in which tenured professors mentored assistant professors.

And that was just for starters. The ACT Task Force on Teaching, Learning, and Technology has created the Teaching and Learning with Technology Institute, which provides funding for faculty/staff projects using technology in the classroom. Faculty members in a variety of disciplines have received training and funding that is enabling them to offer Theory-Practice/Service-Learning courses. [See article on page 2.]

This year the Scholarship of Teaching initiatives have expanded to include Oxford’s interaction with other institutions. A team of Oxford administrators and faculty—Ken Carter, Fang Chen, Penny England, Myra Frady, Kent Linville, Kitty McNeill, Heather Patrick, Gretchen Schulz, and Patti Owen-Smith, also a Carnegie Fellow—attended the AAHE’s 2002 Summer Academy held in Vermont. The Oxford team, along with teams from fifty other schools, participated in workshops and developed team projects related to teaching enhancement and assessment.

At the conference this November, Oxford faculty will present the results of these initiatives and share their knowledge with Carnegie Fellows and other specialists in the Scholarship of Teaching. The college sees the conference as a significant step in its plans to “go public” with its programs and to assume leadership among institutions similarly dedicated to the enhancement of teaching and learning.
The College Student Report, to be released this fall by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), rates Oxford College students significantly higher than the national average in their contributions to the community. The NSSE survey complements the U.S. News and World Report rankings by obtaining information directly from students about the quality of campus life. Students answer questions about how they spend their time, what they have gained from their classes, and how engaged they are with peers, faculty, and the community.

Joe Moon, associate dean of Campus Life, believes Oxford’s emphasis on engagement with the community is part of its tradition. “Throughout its history, Oxford College students have demonstrated concern for and involvement in our surrounding community. Oxford has never required volunteers as some other colleges have chosen to do; still, being engaged in the life of the community is part of the student culture at Oxford.”

Volunteer Oxford, a chartered club of the SGA, is one avenue for students who want to participate in community-service projects. This organization includes opportunities for students to help with a variety of agencies, including Habitat for Humanity International, the Points of Light Foundation, Oxfam America, Newton County

More than 80 percent of Oxford students participate in some form of community service activity.

General Hospital, the YMCA, “Do Something,” Project Open Hand-Atlanta, United Way Online, Habitat-Emory, Hands On Atlanta, Rockdale County Hospital, AIDS Walk Atlanta, and Cool2Serve.

“In addition to the good work of Volunteer Oxford in nurturing a broad variety of service opportunities for individuals and student groups, Oxford faculty and staff collaboratively seek ways to make out-of-class engagement meaningful and reflective,” says Moon.

One of these programs is Theory-Practice/Service-Learning (TPSL) courses offered by Oxford faculty across several disciplines. Professor of Psychology Patti Owen-Smith first offered these “Living Laboratory” courses in 1996 as a way to integrate classroom theory with actual experience in the local community. This fall TPSL courses will be offered in chemistry, economics, English, philosophy, women’s studies, and psychology. Oxford’s service partnership with Newton County allows students to serve as tutors, mentors, counselors, and advocates to schools, social service agencies, technical colleges, literacy programs, residential centers for children and adults, and a pediatric bereavement camp.

“Service and engagement at Oxford College is a deep value of the institution,” says Moon. “These initiatives complement our educational mission by opening the world of practical experience to test against the theory learned in class.” Patti Owen-Smith adds, “It’s common for students to continue their service work with an agency in the summer; even after the course is completed, because of relationships the students build within the community.”
Loving Oxford
Finding a place for our small college

It is a small college, yet there are those who love it,” so wrote Daniel Webster in defense of Dartmouth College. Oxford graduates can echo Webster. This small college with its rich history and attention to natural beauty elicits pride and prompts love. But in this Oxfordians are not alone. There are more than one thousand small colleges (“small” meaning less than a thousand students) in the United States. Each has a venerable history and those who love it. Lamentably, it takes more than love to sustain a college. Since 1997, fourteen of these small colleges have closed, and others will follow. Enrollments continue to grow, but colleges face formidable competition for students, faculty, and resources. Although beloved and valued, the small college like Oxford must be wily as it seeks to sustain a college. Since 1997, fourteen of these small colleges have closed, and others will follow. Enrollments continue to grow, but colleges face formidable competition for students, faculty, and resources. Although beloved and valued, the small college like Oxford must be wily as it seeks to find a “place” not only in the national context, but also in the rapidly growing Atlanta metropolitan area that boasts forty higher education institutions, and in the topflight research university of Emory. What is the “place” for Oxford, a small college, in these various contexts?

That place is found through very specific and self-conscious choices. As we make these choices we need to anchor them in a very realistic understanding of the strengths and limits of our institution. Like a mature individual, Oxford must be self-reflective about its past, present, and future.

I try to ground my choices about Oxford in three different ways of thinking about the college—the historical, the comparative, and the contextual. Each of these ways of understanding has its own strengths and limits. We need all three in order to have a realistic grasp of Oxford’s potential. Such understanding encourages love, but it is also the seedbed of the “wisdom” we need to help grow into the future.

It’s easiest to understand the merits of the historical understanding of an institution. History illustrates development; it gives ballast, and is the organic and frankly slow understanding of the place. An historical understanding inspires and fosters appreciation.

The limitations of the historical view are that it gives knowledge of only the college itself. It does not allow an analysis of its comparison with other colleges. In order to have that we need a second method of understanding, namely the comparative one. The comparative method is much in vogue in higher education today. It measures what is easily quantifiable about a college and hence comparable; through comparison we learn how we stack up against other colleges. Comparison is useful in analyzing specific problems and bringing about amelioration. But as we know, comparison has its limits. In the end it tells us how we are doing in relationship to others, but does not define or get to the heart of the living college community.

We need both.

I can imagine that we would resoundingly agree with the奋力 Daniel Webster: this small college is needed now more than ever. Now more than ever we need citizens who can both appreciate and criticize, analyze and synthesize, take responsibility and build community.

Mr. Grier, a small college, continues, but it continues only if its faculty, staff, students, and alumni have a broad understanding of its mission, context, history, and relationship with like institutions. This fosters wellness in addition to love. We need both.

Camille Cottrell is an assistant professor of art history. She received a BFA in printmaking from the University of South Carolina, and a PhD in studio arts, criticism and aesthetics, and art history from the University of Georgia. Heather Patrick, who came to Oxford last year as visiting assistant professor of chemistry, was hired for a tenure track assistant professor position in the Department of Chemistry. She received a BSE in chemical engineering from Princeton University and a PhD in chemical engineering from Georgia Tech.

In Brief

Grier Gift Supports Georgia Students

This past fall, Oxford College received $425,000 in a bequest from Orin Thomas ’55, who died in November 1999. Grier, who was an administrative specialist for the Department of the Army in San Francisco, and who had worked previously as a chemist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, named Oxford as the primary beneficiary of his estate. A native of Blakely, Georgia, Grier specified in his will that the funds be used to support students from Georgia. Due to that request, and because Grier loved to travel, the scholarship support will be split into a traditional tuition scholarship account to help Georgia students, and another account designated for Georgia students who need financial aid to participate in Oxford classes that have an international travel component.

“This is just another example of the kind of love and sense of loyalty that Oxford alumni have for this unique place,” says Bruce Burney, director of development at Oxford. “A dozen of Mr. Grier’s classmates showed up on the day that David Hale, the estate executor and close friend of Mr. Grier’s, visited to present the check to us. Mr. Hale, who had never been to Oxford, was stunned by the sense of family and friendship in the room. He said that he now understood why Oxford College had meant so much to Tom. We are forever thankful for alumni like Tom Grier, who, through their generosity, make it possible for future students to have a profound educational experience here at Oxford College.”

New Hires Enrich Oxford’s Faculty

This fall, four new faculty members join the college in a range of disciplines.

Nitya Jacob comes to the Department of Biology as assistant professor. She received a BS in biology from Agnes Scott and a PhD in horticulture and crop science from Ohio State University. Wendy Dirks is an assistant professor of anthropology. She received a BA in anthropology from Hunter College and a PhD in anthropology from New York University.

Camille Cottrell is an assistant professor of art history. She received a BFA in printmaking from the University of South Carolina, and a PhD in studio arts, criticism and aesthetics, and art history from the University of Georgia. Heather Patrick, who came to Oxford last year as visiting assistant professor of chemistry, was hired for a tenure track assistant professor position in the Department of Chemistry. She received a BSE in chemical engineering from Princeton University and a PhD in chemical engineering from Georgia Tech.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

FACULTY

• Susan Riner, senior lecturer in mathematics, received an Emory Williams Award for Excellence in Teaching.

• Hoyt Oliver, professor of religion, received the Georgia Urban Forest Council’s award for Outstanding Elected Official for Service to Urban Forestry.

• Theodosia Wade, senior lecturer in biology, received the Phi Theta Kappa Teaching Award.

• Richard Shappell, professor of physical education and dance, received the Outstanding Teaching Award from Oxford Alumni.

• Patricia Owen-Smith, professor of psychology, received a $20,000 grant from the University Teaching Fund to support campuswide expansion of Theory-Practice courses.

• Matthew Morris, associate professor of French, received a $15,000 grant from the University Research Fund for the publication of two books, Le Roman de Meaulnes: A Critical Edition and A Bilingual Edition of the Roman Parthenay, both under contract to the Edwin Mellon Press.

• Sharon Lewis, professor of psychology, received a grant of $13,550 from the University Teaching Fund in support of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference this fall at Oxford.

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Alumni Class Notes

P R I O R TO 1969

Elizabeth Smith Aversa ’83Ox-’86C is president of the Association of Library and Information Science Education. She is director of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee. She lives in Knoxville, Tenn.

Charles Bracy, a son, Bryan Alexander, on March 31, 1990.

Robert Clinton Smith Jr. ’71Ox-’73C is a training captain pilot with Delta Air Lines. He is the first Hispanic judge appointed to DeKalb County State Court.

Jeffrey Alan Glider ’85Ox-’88B is director of acquisitions and development for the Eastern United States for Wells Real Estate Funds in Atlanta.

J. Antonio “Tony” DeCampos ’89Ox-’91C is a Record’s Court judge, sworn in by Governor Roy Barnes. He is the first Hispanic judge appointed to DeKalb County State Court.

In 1980–1989

Robert Todd ’80Ox-’83B is executive director of the DeKalb Medical Foundation. She and her husband, Robert Keown Jr. ’80Ox-’83C, live in Atlanta.

Amanda Michiko Martin ’77Ox-’79C is a pediatrition in solo private practice in Anniston, Ala., and she is chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Regional Medical Center.

In 1990–1999

A L U M N I C L A S S N O T E S

Todd, a son, Stewart Bradwell, on January 24, 2001.

BORN TO: Amanda Boor ’81Ox and her husband, Joe, a son, Samuel Smith, on December 17, 2001. Samuel joins his mother and father in Atlanta.

Rhonda Davidson ’82 OX-’84B is executive director of the DeKalb Medical Foundation. She and her husband, Robert, Keown ’83Ox live in Atlanta.

Amanda Rowell Keller ’82Ox-’84C and her husband Scott, a daughter, Olivia Charles, on November 21, 2001. Olivia joins her two sisters and her parents in Atlanta.

Jeffrey Alan Glider ’85Ox-’88B is director of acquisitions and development for the Eastern United States for Wells Real Estate Funds in Atlanta.

Rebecca Brady ’86Ox and her husband, John Charles Bracy, a son, Bryan Alexander, on March 31, 2001. Bryan joins his brother and parents in Charleston, S.C.

Amanda Bower ’86Ox-’89C and her husband, Todd, a son, Stewart Bradwell, on January 24, 2001.

Stewart joins his three brothers and his parents in Knoxville, Tenn.

BORN TO: Bryan Etheridge Hodgens ’87Ox-’89C and his wife, Katie, a son, Davis Richards, on October 18, 2001. Davis joins his brother Alex and his parents in Charlotte, N.C.

BORN TO: Rosanne Piper ’87Ox and William Davis on November 9, 2001.

BORN TO: Walter J. Fraser III ’88Ox-’90C and his wife, Erin Maroney Fraser ’89Ox, a daughter, Philippa Wise, on November 1, 2001. The family lives in Bronxville, N.Y.

Daniel Stallings ’88Ox-’90C received the 2001 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region IV East Medied Student Affairs Professional Award. He is associate director of leadership and service programs at Ball State University.

J. Antonio “Tony” Delcampo ’89Ox-’91C is a Recorder’s Court judge, sworn in by Governor Roy Barnes. He is the first Hispanic judge appointed to DeKalb County State Court.


MARRIED: Kimberly Scott ’95Ox-’97C and James Bruce Collins on June 30, 2011.

MARRIED: Kate Bodycum ’96Ox-’98C-’01AH and Christopher Matthew Covington ’96Ox-’98C on May 6, 2001.

Kirsten Marie Gafric ’96Ox-’98C received her law degree from Cleveland Marshall College of Law in May 2001. She passed the New York State Bar Exam in 2001.

BORN TO: Dutton Maxwell Miller ’96Ox-’98B and his wife, Erin Tib Miller ’96Ox-’98C, a daughter, Ella Lee, on May 14, 2002. The family lives in Columbia, S.C.

Paula Denise Martin ’90Ox-’93C is teaching English under the supervision of the Peace Corps. She is director of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee. She lives in Knoxville, Tenn.

BORN TO: Catherine Perry Hamilton ’90Ox-’92C and her husband, Christopher, a daughter, Annie O’Neal, on September 6, 2001.

BORN TO: Lea-Anne Jackson ’90Ox-’92C and her husband, Tom Dempsey, a daughter, Ava Jackson Dempsey, on July 27, 2001. The family lives in Atlanta.

BORN TO: Julie Windolph Metz ’90Ox-’92C and her husband, Albert, a son, Joshua Haywood, on June 19, 2000. Joshua joins his brother, Jacob, and his parents in Decatur.

BORN TO: Ingle Owens-Schraer ’90Ox and her husband, John, a daughter, Rachel Ruth, on November 29, 2001. The family lives in North Augusta, S.C.

BORN TO: Andrew Gorman Waddell ’90Ox-’92B and his wife, Angela Ford Graham ’92Ox-’94C, and his family lives in Atlanta.

BORN TO: Beth Young Hew ’91Ox-’93M and her husband, Maurice Jr., a son, Joshua Thomas, on November 28, 2001. The family lives in Pearlland, Texas.

BORN TO: Angela Ford Graham ’92Ox-’94C, and her husband Jason ’92Ox-’94C, a daughter, Erin Rose, on November 14, 2000.

BORN TO: Ann Ross Callbearth ’93Ox-’94C and her husband, Andrew, a daughter, Emily Maurens, on October 21, 2001.

Horace Johnson Jr. named Superior Court Judge

In September Horace Johnson Jr. ’77Ox-’79B was sworn in as fourth judge for the Alcovy Judicial Circuit. He was named to the position by Governor Roy Barnes this summer.

Visiting our website: www.emory.edu/OXFORD

A L U M N I C L A S S N O T E S