Hampshire celebrates James Baldwin’s work

One of the most celebrated writers to serve as a Five College faculty member was the subject of a monthlong exhibit at the Hampshire College Art Gallery in October. James Baldwin, the award-winning author of Go Tell It on the Mountain, served as a Five College professor during the 1983–84 and 1985–86 academic years, teaching literature at Hampshire and the University of Massachusetts. Before he died in 1987, Baldwin made quite an impression on the Five College community as a teacher, scholar, artist and colleague.

The exhibit focused on Baldwin’s life and work, particularly on his time at Five Colleges. It included art that he was the subject of—such as photographs by Jerome Liebling and portraits by Leonard Baskin—and that he created—such as his books and his collaborations with Richard Avedon and Margaret Mead. The exhibit was part of a larger celebration hosted by Hampshire to kick off a fundraising effort to endow the college’s Baldwin Scholars Program, which supports gifted, underserved students.

UMass brings mutual mentoring to Five Colleges

Negotiating the sometimes Byzantine, often unwritten customs of a college or university community can be difficult for anyone, especially for faculty members who are new and underrepresented on campus. Rather than risk losing such educators to the stresses and frustrations of the uninitiated, the University of Massachusetts Amherst in September introduced a Five College–wide mutual mentoring program to connect veterans with newcomers.

Studies show that new faculty who quickly find connections with established campus members are less likely to leave. Recognizing the value of such relationships, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation developed the Mutual Mentoring Initiative, supporting mentoring efforts at institutions nationwide. After a pilot program at UMass proved promising, Mellon awarded the university $400,000 to establish its own program.

The money will support two faculty grant programs and a Five College professional network to be administered by the university’s Office of Faculty Development. “The Five College network consists of several traditional institutions annually to encourage the development of social connections, professional networks and mentoring partnerships among faculty across the five campuses,” explains Mary Deane Sorcinelli, associate provost for faculty development. “Our first-ever New Faculty Welcoming Reception at the opening of the school year was an unqualified success, with more than 80 new faculty from all Five Colleges using mentoring as the medium for exchanging knowledge, resources, experiences and opportunities.”

For more information about Mutual Mentoring, contact the Office of Faculty Development at ofd@acad.umass.edu.

Africa Day 2007

Five Colleges this fall inaugurated a new certificate program in cognitive neuroscience—the study of the mind as it is manifested in the physical brain. Cognitive neuroscientists combine psychophysical and brain imaging techniques to examine the brain function underlying cognitive abilities in humans. Currently open to students enrolled at Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith colleges, the Five College cognitive neuroscience program offers a spectrum of courses ranging from “Philosophy of the Mind” to “Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology.” As is the case with Five Colleges’ 11 other certificate programs, students normally fulfill requirements by taking courses at multiple campuses while completing a major at their own institution.

Students in the program probably won’t develop the knitting skills evident in the above piece from the Museum of Scientifically Accurate Fabric Brain Art featured on the program’s Web site, but they may get the chance to see the human brain at work using more advanced technology. Thanks to an agreement recently negotiated between the University of Massachusetts and Cooley-Dickinson Hospital, scientists at Five College institutions will soon have access one day a week to a new MRI machine located near the university. “The arrangement will create exciting new opportunities for research in cognitive neuroscience, as well as other fields,” says Jerrold Meyer, the UMass psychology professor who helped negotiate the agreement. “Students participating in faculty-led research projects will also benefit.”—Malvina Girma UM ’08

New Five College certificate program launched

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Acts and words

As I was moving into my office here over the summer, after 14 years in the marketing department of Marlboro College, I found a bag full of t-shirts in my closet. The front of each shirt sported the consortium logo and “Five Colleges, Inc.” On the back was printed “Cooperation is an unnatural act.”

You don’t have to work in higher education for 14 years to get that joke. Cooperation is difficult enough within a single campus, with academic departments, administrators and students all competing for dwindling resources, talented people and media attention. It is all but impossible to imagine five different institutions actively sharing talented people, dwindling resources and media attention while they simultaneously compete for them. But I knew the joke on the t-shirt wouldn’t be funny if this particular unnatural act wasn’t being regularly committed, so I put the shirts away and hoped for the best. For me, hoping for the best was important, because in addition to being responsible for getting publications like this created, I am charged with ensuring the cooperation of about 20 Five College committees. I am someone who always thought a good t-shirt slogan would read “Committee” is the longest four-letter word in the English language. There are few things that can such the life out of a good idea faster than forming a committee to take a look at it.

Combining unnatural acts with four-letter words, I faced my first set of meetings with the committees I staff is anything but objectionable. Multicultural life committee members organizing a students of color reception, admissions directors hitting the road together to court high school counselors, art faculty co-teaching a drawing course, museum directors forming a significant new cultural force. I am impressed! Much of the credit for such successes should go to my predecessor, Carol Angus, as well as to my talented Five College colleagues. But much of it should also go to you, gentle reader, especially if, at some time in your tenure on one of these campuses, you have worked on one of the 80 or so committees, programs, centers and departments of Five Colleges. You make it look as natural as breathing.

—Kevin Kennedy

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Office of Faculty Development

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Carol Angus, Five Colleges’ “gifted cat herder,” retires

It is all but impossible to talk to anyone about Carol Angus without hearing about her sense of humor and her impeccable taste. Her sense of humor served her well in her 23 years at Five Colleges, her taste was icing on the cake.

“She has a formidable sense of humor, very often at her own expense,” says Sue Tiran, coordinator of the Five College Public School Partnership. “She had a keen understanding of what it took to make collegiality work. Part of it is her sense of humor, but part of it is her ability to be inclusive; she shared the table.”

Carol arrived at Five Colleges in 1984, a young mother returning full-time to the workforce. Her main job was to collect and publish a catalogue of all courses taught at the Five Colleges in the upcoming year. An intimidating enough job today with email and Web downloads, Carol did it without a computer, and laughs now that the catalogues seemed out of date as soon as they were published. “Still, I think they contributed in their own way to cooperation among the Five Colleges,” she notes.

Those early course catalogues weren't the only thing contributing toward cooperation, according to Five College Executive Director Lorna Peterson. “When Carol came on board we barely had computers, barely had a communications strategy, had barely begun doing collaboration among admissions directors and Museums10 was essentially Mu- seems6. All that has developed since then has happened under Carol’s watch.”

Museums10 not only increased its numbers under Carol’s watch, but evolved from an occasional meeting of museum directors to a group with shared programming, a tight marketing plan and a big impact on cultural tourism in the Pioneer Valley, as well as the Dutch! and Bookmarks programs. “The collaboration could not have existed without Carol’s leadership,” says Nora Maroulis, director of development and marketing at theEric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, one of Museums10’s independent members. “She acted as the gifted cat herder here in Amherst and as the elegant and articulate representative of the collaboration.”

Back on the campuses, Carol could shift gears and coordinate new development of academic programming. “Carol was immensely supportive of early initiatives from the Five College art departments to put together a collaborative program,” says visual art professor Haydn Davies of the Five College drawing course that for 14 years brought together 10 art faculties each fall. “She contributed enormously to the success—and longevity—of the course, as well as to the positive, collegial, highly collaborative spirit in which this joint venture has been con- ducted over the years. She was the glue that held us together.”

At her going away party in June, Carol summed up her feelings, referring to some of the many committees she coor- dinated. “So though I leave Five Colleges no better at physics than I ever was, not a painter, not a drama director or professor of student affairs, I leave it a much richer person for my years here, feeling the needs of each to the other—in some ways contributed to making your work easier. Thank you for all these wonderful years.”

Think Globally, Eat Locally: Dining services buy from area farms

In an effort to support the local economy and connect their cam- puses to growers, dining services at each of the Five Colleges are purchasing, serving and highlight- ing fresh, locally grown food. That effort came into sharp relief during the week of September 24 when, all of the colleges participated in the first annual Massachusetts Harvest for Stu- dents Week. The spotlight was on local food and cultural tourism, such as the University of Massachusetts’ “Fresh, Local and On the Menu” celebration featuring local produce at the Five College Café, apple cider and vegetables, as well as an opportu- nity to meet farmers and learning to make fiddle music at UMass’ Worcester Dining Commons.

Last year, the five campuses purchased on average 20 percent of fresh, local food. Naturally, as student numbers increase, so do the needs of students, the college says. “What they are doing is tremendous and good for the environment too,” says Steve Best, the Five College sustainability coordinator. “But there’s a long list of fresh fruits and vegetables—including green beans, chard, kale, green onion, tomatoes and to- matoes—from such local growers as Outlook Farm in Westhampton and Czajkowski Farm in Hadley, and milk from High Lawn Farm in Lee. ‘Of course, the students love the food because the flavor of fresh local food is unsurpassed and because their college is helping keep area farms in business,’ says Ann Finley, area manager for din- ing services at Hampshire. “She says,” she adds, “You just can’t get the same quality food at home, such as watch a health video from the National Institutes of Health, Comenitz says, but when they got to the classroom, the school district’s shared bandwidth simply didn’t have the capacity to stream video, and other uses were often slowed to a crawl. “The business of doing school would get inter- rupted as bandwidth was getting choked,” he says. “We don’t have those restrictions now.”

Because Colleges doesn’t charge towns for access to the network, Amherst is able to plug its savings into buying expanded bandwidth from its service provider in Springfield, which connects the town to the outside world. “Where we were spending more than $500 a month for access to two TI lines, now we have seven times the bandwidth,” he says. “Thank you so much for an informative, well-paced, im- pAckers’ tour Mount Holyoke’s campus in this photo by Elaine Prentice of La Cueva High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

High School Counselor Colloquy spreads the word

They came from California and New Jersey, Texas and Maine, from big suburban public schools and small liberal arts colleges and from des- served minorities. For two strikingly beautiful days in late October, 61 high school coun- selors from around the country tour- nored the campuses of the Five Colleges, meeting with admissi- ons staff, students and faculty and appreciating the programming many never knew existed.

Every other year since 2003, Five Colleges and each insti- tution’s admissions office have hosted the Five Colleges Counselor Colloquy. As the office’s pursue a $25 million initiative to bring broadband Internet access to 10 western Massachusetts, Five Colleges is doing its own part, allowing several underserved Pioneer Valley towns access to its own 53-mile, $3.6 million fiber-optic network. In the spring the consortium completed a broadband network stretching up from Springfield and around the five campuses. By fall all the towns, including a large series of capacity-based restrictions now. “Thank you so much for an informative, well-paced, im- pIndex

Five Colleges brings broadband to western Massachusetts towns

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