A New Look—and a New Outlook

This issue of the Five College magazine Ink takes on a new look this spring with the appearance of what we’re calling “newsbreaks.” In part, it represents an attempt to find a more timely vehicle for reporting on Five College news. It is also a cost-saving measure, enabling us to move in some new directions.

The savings realized, for example, have been applied to redesigning the Five College Web site. Last fall, we hired a local firm called Gravity Switch to assist us in reenvisioning and reconfiguring the site, whose look and structure had long since become dated and wan.

Over a period of several months, Gravity Switch worked closely with members of the Five College staff to produce a new look and a more user-friendly navigational structure that could serve many different constituencies, internal and external—faculty, students, and staff, but also prospective students and their families, scholars who might be candidates for positions here, reporters looking for story ideas, college administrators with questions about Five College cooperation, and even tourists visiting the Five College area.

The UIR also changed (www.fivecolleges.edu), to take a moment to look and let us know what you think of our efforts to date. The site is still a work in progress and over the summer months we plan to redesign some existing program pages and even post a few new ones.

Earlier this spring, we announced that the May issue of the printed Five College Calendar of Events would be the last. Some might say it marks the passing of an era. The calendar, which dates to the 1970s, was among the first tangible evidence of cooperation among the five campuses. But the advent of technology has rendered the printed calendar no longer cost-effective or timely. People have different expectations for information and for how they obtain it. The on-line calendar offers more complete and more accurate information about all that’s happening on the campuses because there’s no “deadline”—events can be added or updated all day every day, up to a year or more in advance. And, as part of the redesign of the Web site, the on-line calendar is also sporting a new look this spring, brighter, easier to read, and easier to search. Give it a look, too: http://calendar.fivecolleges.edu.

—Carol Angus, editor

www.fivecolleges.edu

Jean Stabell Retires—Again

Five College Treasurer/Business Manager Jean Stabell (above, left) will retire in earnest this time, she says, when she departs in late summer. Stabell, who had previously served in this position for nearly a decade, officially retired in 1998 but agreed to come out of retirement on a transitional basis two years later when the position became vacant.

In late April, following a national search that netted well over a hundred applicants, Five Colleges announced the appointment of Marie Hess (above, right) as its new treasurer/business manager. Hess is currently serving as the deputy director of the Fine Arts Center of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is scheduled to take up her new duties in late July, giving her some crossover time with the current treasurer.

Commenting on this transition, Five College Executive Director Lorna M. Peterson said: “We are all indebted to Jean for stepping in and stepping up to help us out. As she leaves for a second well-deserved retirement, we send her off with all our best wishes for many golden years ahead. We also feel fortunate in having someone of Marie Hess’s caliber to assume this very important position and look forward to welcoming her to the Five College staff.” (For more about the new appointment, go to www.fivecolleges.edu.)

African Scholars: The First Wave

The first three scholars to be brought here under the new Five College African Scholars program arrived in a January blizzard, smiled through the deep frosts of this past winter, and are still smiling as they prepare to conclude their four-month residency in Tanzania: the Case of Highly Infected Areas in the Southern Highlands.

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Student to Student Once Again

Students wanting to borrow a book from one of the other libraries in the 1970s had to produce a written note from one of the other libraries in the 1970s. “In those days, a flurry of notes used to crisscross the Valley,” recalls Hampshire College Librarian Gai Carpenter. Many people credit an active Five College Student Coordinating Board with successfully lobbying to change all that. Open libraries, open borrowing, hassle-free cross registration, and even buses on weekends were some of the issues the original FCSCB tackled. During the mid-1980s, lacking compelling issues of similar magnitude, the board ceased to exist. Last fall, the presidents of the Student Government Associations of each school met for the first time in many years. One of their key decisions was to reconstitute the Five College Student Coordinating Board with a revised and updated mission. As this new mission statement was being reviewed by each SGA this spring, the Hedging board sponsored its first all-campus social. The First Annual Five College Dance Party, held on April 24 in Chapin Auditorium at Mount Holyoke, attracted nearly 600 students. The board has scheduled a May meeting to make plans for next year. For more news about the new Five College Student Coordinating Board, go to www.fivecolleges.edu/for_students/for_students_studentboard.html.
“Image Sense: The Arts in the Liberal Arts”—a Lecture/Performance

In Full Bloom: Student Symposia and a Film Festival

Cooperation at Work Behind the Scenes

Museums of the Five College Area

The symposium model organized on a five-campus basis furnishes a unique kind of preprofessional forum for undergruates who serve as presenters and for those who come to learn about their peers’ research. Physics and Anthropology were among the first to utilize this kind of research forum. The April calendar reveals some newsmakers, too.

The first-ever Five College Ethnomusicology Student Symposium, hosted by Smith College on April 26, was an all-day affair featuring three panel sessions and a keynote speech given by Ingrid Monson, Quincy Jones Professor of African American Music at Harvard University. The symposium was conceived by six ethnomusicologists who represent one of the newest forms of cooperation in music. Last year, they organized and sponsored a successful Five College World Music Festival. On the same April day, budding anthropologists from all five campuses gathered at Amherst College for the annual undergraduate symposium sponsored by the departments of Anthropology. The keynote speaker for the daylong session was Amherst College alumna Vanessa Fong ’96, professor of anthropology at Harvard University, who spoke on “Anthropology and Public Secrets.”

Smith College President Carol Christ welcomed students and faculty assembled at Smith on April 12 for the sixth annual student symposium sponsored by the Five College Center for Crossroads in the Study of the Americas (CISA). Twenty-one undergraduates from the five colleges presented work from a number of disciplines, focusing on issues of identity, power, resistance, and cultural exchange in the Americas. The 10th consecutive Five College Student Film Festival took place on Saturday, April 26, in Smith Auditorium at Amherst College. Winning entries screened included narrative, documentary, animation, and experimental works. The availability of courses in film and video production has been expanded by the presence of two joint faculty appointees who teach at all five campuses on a prearranged schedule drawn up by the Five College Film Council. Liz Miller was this year’s visiting assistant professor at Smith College and UMass Amherst; Ann Steenmagel was visiting professor at Amherst and Mount Holyoke Colleges.

More information about the symposia and the film festival is available at www.fivecolleges.edu.

The Five College Center for the Study of World Languages will add a new dimension to its language offerings over the next three years thanks to a grant of $555,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, awarded in April. For 12 years now, the center has made it possible for undergraduates to study some of the less commonly taught languages such as Czech, Swahili, Urdu, Serb- ian, and Croatian through its Supervised Independent Language Program (SILP). Now it proposes to develop Web environments to support courses in five of these languages—Arabic (levels one and two), Farsi, Georgian, Hindi, and Turkish. It also plans to include for the first time a supervised written component for specified languages in that grouping. “No single institution or consortium has the financial resources to hire a professor for every language that students want to study,” observes Center Director and UMass Amherst Professor Italian Elizabeth H. D. Mazzecco (pictured, right). The supervised independent study model that she and her associate, Dr. Amy Wordelman (pictured, left), have developed offers, they believe, a pedagogically sound and cost-effective alternative for meeting this need, “so long as the students come with a solid background in second language acquisition.” Reflecting the Center’s belief that “linguistic and cultural competence go hand in hand,” each of the six new programs to be created will include not only a detailed syllabus but also a Web environment featuring a video introduction to the language and culture, and digitized audio and video designed to further enrich the learning experience. “Learning the word for ‘hello’ in Farsi, Mazzecco points out, “is only a tiny part of what needs to be internalized in order to properly use the greeting in Middle Eastern societies.”

More information about the Center and its programs can be found at www.umass.edu/fcldang.

Museums of the Five College Area

Even outstanding museums in one gorgeous place! is how a new brochure describes “Museums of the Five College Area.” The brochure—and a new Web site (www.fivecolleges.edu/museums)—constitute the first phase of a campaign to carve out an identity, and a following, for the area that one travel writer recently called a “museum mecca.” Spearheaded by the directors of 11 very different museums, all of whom share the goal of making their collections better known to and more frequently visited by students and scholars and the general public, the group comprises the Five College Museums, Historic Deerfield, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, the Yiddish Book Center, the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, and the Pratt Museum of Natural History. Their campaign has received a special boost this spring with the much heralded re-opening of the Smith Art Museum as the cornerstone of the new Brown Fine Arts Center. “For a long time, college museums saw their mission as serving only their students,” said Suzannah Fabing, director of the Smith College Museum of Art, in an article that appeared in a recent Travel section of the Boston Globe. “That’s changed.”

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