



In the Loop



at Simmons College

A Monthly Newsletter for Faculty and Staff

A Message From Helen Drinan

As we conclude the 2010 academic year, I think it is useful to take stock of what we have accomplished together.

For the better part of this year we have been heavily occupied with the Academic Business Review (ABR). This work has included a careful look at our course offerings, finding inefficiencies and redundancies; a review of our organizational structure, seeking either cost reductions or strategic opportunities, or both; and assessing our academic overhead, looking to improve performance and synergies.

The first of these three steps was completed and resulted in a savings of \$3.3 million; that savings has been captured in our 2011 budget. The second of these steps has involved community wide discussion and input, and progress was reported to the Board of Trustees in May. The third step will begin this summer, and will be completed by mid academic year 2011. The entire process was designed to save a total of \$7 million, and I expect we will achieve that goal when all the work is complete.

In addition to all this analytical work, we have maintained discipline in the administrative cost reductions we achieved in 2009, ensuring that we benefit from the hard work we all did last year to reduce our administrative cost structure. We carefully monitor personnel headcount and manage new hires on a one-by-one basis. We also have an ongoing Indirect Spend Team working continuously to seek better choices for how we buy and use materials and supplies.

Finally, we have implemented some of the items we identified as strategic spending needs for FY10. These items included a new chart of accounts, a new enrollment management system, selected website upgrades, and foundational diversity work. We are now resuming strategy work we began last year, tying together all the various and important efforts of the last 18 months together through an internal, community involved process led by an external consultant, Bink Garrison. We expect all these internally focused efforts to "go public" – that is, external to Simmons – this fall. We will begin sharing parts of the strategy work internally this summer.

Simmons is emerging from great financial and strategic challenges, and I believe we are in a strengthened position that will equal the very best of our competitors. Thanks to everyone in the community who has made that possible.

Helen

Diversity Council Makes Headway

Created last year, the President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (PDIAC) is charged with providing advice and consultation, setting priorities, shaping strategies, and integrating diversity and inclusion principles into all facets of the College.

Council members in FY 10 include: President Helen Drinan, Chair; Provost Charlena Seymour; Deputy Provost Carol Bonner; Associate Provost Andrew Effrat; Dean of Student Life Sarah Neill; Vice President for Marketing and Undergraduate Admission Cheryl Howard; Associate Professor and Past President of the Faculty Senate Anne Marie Barron; and SSW Associate Professor Gary Bailey. Simmons Diversity and Inclusion Practice Leader Jennifer Kilson-Page and Kim Cromwell serve as consultants to the PDIAC.

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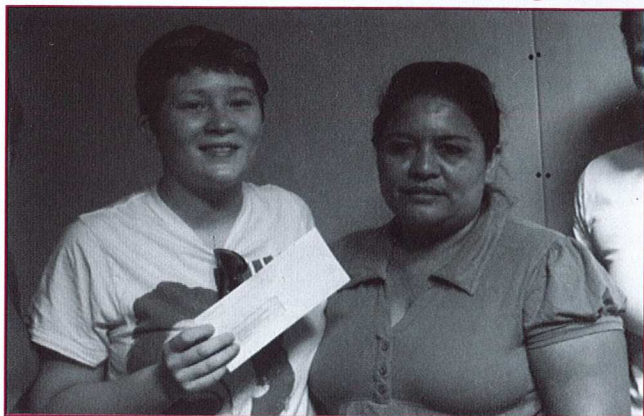
During the past year, council members defined three areas of focus: (1) To increase recruitment, admission, and retention of undergraduate and graduate students of color (2) To increase recruitment and retention of administrators, faculty, and staff of color, and (3) To continue to create a welcoming and inclusive community at Simmons.

In the spring, all faculty members were invited to submit proposals for projects to support the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and faculty of color. Two proposals were selected for FY11 implementation.

Associate Professor of Nutrition Sara Edelstein received a grant for her proposal "Increasing Admissions of Diverse Students to Simmons College through Fostering a Partnership with a Local High School(s)." Using the nutrition program and nutrition-based learning activities, Professor Edelstein will work with 1-2 Boston-area high schools to develop in-school and after-school nutrition activities, establish a nutrition club with Simmons students, hold meetings, and have the high school students visit Simmons.

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Study-Abroad Programs Shape Student Learning – CAS



Katie Lewis presents a check to 2009 Honorary Degree Recipient Dr. Rosa Elena Bello

During the past year, *In The Loop* has published several articles about global initiatives at the College. This edition focuses on study-abroad programs at the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

In the past year, 65 Simmons students studied abroad for the summer, semester, or full year, in countries ranging from Australia to Ghana. For many of these students, community service is an integral part of the trip. English Professor Emeritus David Gullette's three-week service learning course to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, is a prime example. In January, he led eight undergraduate and graduate students in exploring Nicaraguan culture by living with families, performing community service by running workshops and support groups, and writing about their experiences.

The students, who hail from all majors, worked with public health campaigns, in Nicaragua, assisting with a dental hygiene workshop, translating for visiting optometrists at an eyeglass clinic, and helping to run a meeting of the diabetes support group. The group also presented a check from the Simmons Women's Center to Dr. Rosa Elena Bello, a 2009 Honorary Degree Recipient. The money, which was raised from the proceeds of Simmons's annual performance of "Vagina Monologues," will be used to build the first battered women's shelter, el Albergue para Mujeres Abusadas, in southern Nicaragua.

Professor Emeritus Gullette is vice president of the Newton (MA)/San Juan del Sur Sister City Project and has been working



Carolyn Noyes assists a patient at a diabetes clinic in San Juan del Sur

in Nicaragua for 25 years. He has been teaching the study-abroad course at Simmons every year since 2002, and has written two books about revolutionary poetry in Nicaragua.

"This most recent service-learning trip to Nicaragua was one of the best ever," said Gullette, who has been working on an anti-parasite campaign and brought home-based water purification systems and hygiene training to rural families in San Juan del Sur. "The combination of hands-on community service and intellectual rigor makes the Nicaragua experience a model for international service-learning."

Another study-abroad course took students to Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hiroshima in May to study Japanese culture and history. Led by Senior Lecturer Ruihua Sun, the 16 undergraduate students in the "Japanese Civilization" course learned about the Japanese way of thinking and language development during their visit. They also experienced first-hand the function of family and the concepts of "uchi" and "soto," which represent the difference between "in-groups" and "out-groups" in Japanese society.

"We scheduled home stays with Japanese families, which give students a closer view of Japanese family life," said Sun. The group also joined a camp with students from Bunka Women's University in Tokyo, stayed at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, and visited the atomic bomb site in Hiroshima, as well as other museums and memorials in the area.

NEASC Process Continues On Schedule

Dr. Thomas Rochon, President of Ithaca College and site team chair for the NEASC accreditation process, visited Simmons May 7 in preparation for the site team visit November 1-3. President Rochon spent the day with a number of stakeholders – students, President's Council members, the co-chairs of the NEASC standard committees, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, President Drinan, and Provost Seymour – to hear about the College's perception of the self-study process and to better understand the Simmons culture.

President Rochon had read the self-study draft, and was able to provide valuable feedback to the co-chairs about next steps in the process. He commended the group on their work, particularly given the challenges in higher education generally, and specifically at Simmons. He also expressed appreciation for the can-

dor of the document and the community's willingness to directly and honestly address uncertainties related to the Academic Business Review.

President Rochon reinforced the importance of campus-wide communication about this process, and the need to integrate data more fully into the draft report. He was particularly complimentary about the collegial spirit he observed at the College across all the groups with whom he met and the cross-unit collaborations that had helped to produce the report.

The self-study is accessible at www.simmons.edu/accreditation and will have to be completed by the end of August in order to send it to the visiting team. The accreditation website will continue to be updated as the process evolves. If you are interested in participating in the site visit, please contact Melissa Kelly.