**Continuing Professional Education: A University Responsibility**

Although we usually think of these strategies as applying to the “nontraditional” student, we are also using them to serve our traditional students. This summer, for instance, the university will offer more than 200 undergraduate course sections in eleven different sites around the state so that our students can take MSU courses while living and working at home—affording them the opportunity to progress more rapidly to their degree. This spring those admitted to the class of 2003 were invited to complete the mathematics placement examination on the Internet using computers at their home or their high schools or any of MSU’s 90 extension and outreach offices located in every county. This summer, before they come to campus, entering freshmen will have the opportunity to complete, via the Internet, a non-credit version of the Fundamentals of Mathematics course that is offered on campus as MTH 1825.

As the explosion of knowledge continues, fulfilling our responsibility to provide access will require us to use such innovative techniques more and more. This is especially true as we reach out to professionals. Purchasers of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) demand high quality services and products, with particular emphasis on cutting-edge knowledge, accessibility and efficiency of the delivery of knowledge, and applicability of new concepts and techniques to their work.

The university is well positioned to address such issues. First, as a research-intensive, knowledge generating institution, we are well able to provide up-to-date and comprehensive information. Second, as a teaching institution, we have developed, and continue to develop, techniques for assessing student learning and providing evidence that participants are actually learning, retaining, and using the knowledge. Third, as a collaborative institution, we have learned to partner with other organizations in order to customize education to fit their specific needs. Finally, as a technologically innovative institution, we have the ability to offer efficient modes of delivery (i.e., teleconferenced interactions and asynchronous exercises and projects) that accelerate the pace of learning so that the information learned can be quickly applied in the participant’s organization.

The Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach is eager to assist academic units in exploring ways that they can begin or expand their provision of CPE. This edition of Outreach Linkages includes an article on our certificate program for the CPE audience as well as descriptions of two quite diverse efforts to make advanced knowledge available to practitioners.

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**MSU is Close to You**

Excitement runs high at the Southeast Michigan Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach this time of year. Telephones ring and e-mail boxes are jammed as students hustle to sign up for MSU SummerStudy. Since the early 1980s, Michigan State University undergraduates and guest students from other colleges and universities have been able to enroll in MSU undergraduate courses ‘close to home’ during the summer. In the last six years, we have witnessed a substantial increase in the interest of MSU students and others in continuing their studies during the summer semester.

Both parents and students report the benefits of being able to study close to home, and benefits accrue to MSU as well. Students view SummerStudy as a way to work full time during the day and complete a course requirement during the evening. Parents view the summer program as a service MSU offers to students to make possible the completion of a bachelor’s degree in four years. And the summer courses generate revenue for MSU departments and provide a variety of teaching experiences for MSU graduate assistants and faculty.

The 1998 SummerStudy Program offers more than 200 undergraduate courses across Michigan. This year, the number of off-campus summer locations has been increased to 13: Battle Creek, Birmingham, Farmington Hills, Flint, Grand Rapids, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Midland, Novi, Sterling Heights, Traverse City, Troy, and West Bloomfield. Most courses are taught in community high school facilities. In each facility, a program/facility coordinator is on-site nightly assisting faculty and students with audiovisual equipment, supplies, room arrangements, and security.

The majority of courses are offered in the traditional face-to-face delivery format but newer technology allows several courses to be taught using the interactive digital (CODEC) technology. For example, two courses will be taught simultaneously to on-campus and off-campus undergraduate audiences, transmitted from East Lansing to Traverse City and Battle Creek. Several Virtual University (Internet) courses are also an option for summer students.

Technology also enables us to offer campus resources and services. Students may access MSU library resources via computer and telephone, a service of Library Outreach. Copies of journal and magazine articles as well as books are mailed to students’ homes. Several course locations allow access to MSU computer labs in MSU off-campus facilities. In other areas, computer facilities comparable to MSU computer labs on campus are rented from community partners and made available to students. Students may buy textbooks for summer courses by dialing 1-800-808-BOOK and placing a credit card order with Follett DirectNet, a service division of the Follett Book Company and the MSU Bookstore, or by calling the Student Bookstore (SBS) at 1-800-968-1111. Books are mailed to their summer addresses.

The development of the statewide SummerStudy plan is the work of MSU-Southwest, working in close collaboration with campus departments and colleges. MSU’s colleges and departments offer a variety of courses statewide such as accounting, humanities, physics, resource development, social sciences, English, foreign languages, history, statistics, and many more. Most of the courses offered are required as part of the undergraduate student’s degree program.

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*SummerStudy refers to MSU’s off-campus undergraduate summer school programs available across Michigan.*

(Continued on pg. 3)
Urban Planners Help Rebuild Detroit
An interview with June Thomas, Ph.D. by Patricia Miller

Urban planning has its roots in ancient societies who made decisions about what geometrical form to use for drinking water and where the “wastewater” would be disposed. It’s a long journey from those days to planning the revitalization of a major city such as Detroit. Planning has been going on for years, but the lure of an empowerment zone grant spurred multifaceted action by faculty, students, citizens, and officials.

Urban planning classes conduct studies that focus on historic preservation, downtown redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization, and land use/ zoning. Now, MSU’s Urban and Regional Planning Program (URP) housed in the Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences, has made significant contributions to rebuilding Detroit. URP previously focused on assisting smaller cities, but professor June Thomas, now URP director, made new contacts through her work with the empowerment zone application process that moved URP into action in Detroit.

Detroit’s Planning Director and MSU Alumna Gloria Robinson picked June Thomas to serve as Strategic Planning Team Manager for Detroit’s empowerment zone application during spring semester of Thomas’s sabbatical year, 1993-94. The final application “won” $100 million in federal grants, plus another $1.9 billion in matching dollars from state and local governments.

Today’s onslaught of available information provides ready material for writers, but it doesn’t make the task of distilling interesting and significant information any easier. Only a creative and motivated mind is capable of accomplishing this task.

MSU works with teachers to refine their own writing skills in order to improve the writing skills of their students.

Michigan State University’s Red Cedar Writing Project (RCWP) works with teachers each summer in 18.3 square mile area of Detroit; only six U.S. urban planning students in studies of the environment are involved exchange students from the Dortmund professors, MSU and German students created plans for land use reconfiguration for the industrial section of Detroit that greatly impressed city officials and community representatives.

Since URP faculty now have direct ties with Detroit city government officials and community groups, their efforts to apply urban planning knowledge to central city challenges will surely grow and evolve. Faculty have expanded their interests to include the state’s urban policy initiative. Thomas has worked with the Michigan Urban Caucus, through her course in Urban Policy Analysis, to provide focused research on state urban policies. Students selected topics of interest to legislators such as brownfield development, community economic development, growth management, neighborhood revitalization, and revenue sharing; and 13 students presented their findings to state legislators in April 1998.

Thomas says, “Linking outreach and community service, in a field such as urban and regional planning but in other ‘applied research’ fields as well, makes all the sense in the world. Students learn much more about society and their future occupations than they could from textbooks and lectures alone. Faculty gain a sense of purpose and service, as well as direction for their own research. The best urban researcher/scholars connect directly with the challenges urban people face.”

Red Cedar Writing Project Upgrades Teacher Skills
An interview with Janet Swenson, Ph.D., by Patricia Miller

Learning to write clearly and expressively is a lifelong process and continuing revelation. Today’s onslaught of available information provides ready material for writers, but it doesn’t make the task of distilling interesting and significant information any easier. Only an integrative and creative mind can accomplish this task.

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Michigan State University’s Red Cedar Writing Project (RCWP) works with teachers each summer in three institutions. The first is the keynote: an invitational institute for teachers selected from a competitive application process. The second is an institute with open enrollment for anyone. The third is an advanced program for teachers who have completed the invitational institute. Each institute follows a basic model to achieve excellence in writing instruction.

Each summer, teachers gather on campus for four weeks to share their own writing and critique “promising practices” in composition classrooms, to discuss recent research, and to develop classroom research projects. RCWP Director, Professor Janet Swenson, says, “Teaching well today is more complex than ever. Teachers are expected to prepare students for state and national testing and still respond to diverse and often conflicting calls for education reform. The institute becomes a supportive environment for teachers to grow their own practice as it is informed by interactions with other outstanding teacher researchers.”

RCWP teachers also participate in Project Outreach funded by the DeWitt Foundation through the National Writing Project (NWP). Project Outreach has three objectives: to increase professional development among teachers in low-income school districts, to improve the quality and relevance of that inservice, and to increase the number of teachers in leadership positions who represent racial, ethnic, or linguistic diversity. Swenson is one of four national coordinators of Project Outreach, a network of 18 NWP sites conducting research in diverse settings as Albuquerque, New Mexico, Juneau, Alaska, and Savannah, Georgia.

To initiate their Project Outreach action research, RCWP hosted “Professional Conversations” in Flint and Detroit so teachers could inform the research team about urban district concerns and interests. These conversations resulted in a special summer institute in 1997 on issues in urban teaching. Out of that experience grew a “Teachers on the Boundaries” group that is still active. The RCWP team has also responded to what they learned from the Professional Conversations by asking teachers to develop “Community Connections,” writing projects in urban schools composed of ten teachers and ten parents, all writing about children’s issues.

Swenson says, “We are really excited about the successful Community Connections writing projects in Detroit and Lansing. The teachers and parents asked for follow-up workshops. We think we can develop an array of support services for use in low-income school districts to develop stronger bonds between those working inside the schools and those in the broader community. And, in the process, teachers can improve the education students receive.”
Employers see dramatic changes in today’s marketplace and need workers with a practical understanding of environmental knowledge. The certificate program in environmental management education at Michigan State University is designed to meet these needs. Many of its graduates work for companies in the chemical and electronics industries, where they are trained to deal with regulatory and environmental issues.

Dr. Mackenzie Davis, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Masten advised the MSU students who have participated in the Waste Management Education and Research Consortium (WERC) contest, held each spring in Las Cruces. (Continued on pg. 4)
Environmental scientists are gradually constructing a complicated picture that portrays both the fine details and the broader implications of the effects of hazardous wastes in the environment. This newer information must be disseminated accurately and in understandable language to the public so they can make the best possible decisions about matters that affect both individual human health and the global environment. One prime method to accomplish this task is to educate practicing environmental journalists in the art of translating emerging environmental knowledge into everyday language.

The Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute at Michigan State University helps educate and broadcast journalists in key areas of environmental knowledge to foster timely and accurate reporting of environmental issues. The Great Lakes region is an environmentally sensitive area that contains the world’s largest supply of fresh water and supports an enormous and complex ecosystem for recreation and preservation. What better place to pursue the timely and critical process of educating journalists who work in this field?

Jim Detjen, Knight Professor of Journalism who founded the Environmental Journalism Program at MSU, directs the institute. He works on this project with Professor Michael Kamrin, Institute of Environmental Toxicology, with funding from an outreach grant from the NIEHS/EPA Superfund Basic Research Program. The institute has also been supported by grants from the George Gund and Helmut Stern Foundations.

In its third year of operation, the four-day institute is held in early summer. About 25 journalists will study the fate of chemicals in the environment, cleanup programs, the roles of federal and state agencies, the effects of pesticides and other chemicals on fish, wildlife, and humans. They also receive instruction on the use of computer-assisted reporting, techniques for environmental reporting, and tips on investigative reporting. Reporters pay a registration fee and their own travel; the institute covers room and board, all materials, tours, and other expenses.

Detjen says, “Much of what we know about the environment comes from the mass media. Yet, reporters at many news organizations are generally trained about science and the environment. Our goal is to bridge this gap and to help improve the quality and accuracy of environmental reporting.”

Detjen and Kamrin believe that educating journalists to produce factual, intelligible, and timely environmental information will help the public keep abreast of and better understand environmental issues. Kamrin says, “In an era when scientific and environmental issues are increasingly politicized, it’s very important that the media be equipped with the resources to provide the public with the most accurate and least biased information possible.”

To complement the annual institute, Kamrin and Detjen developed World Wide Web pages, devoted specifically to journalists, that contain summaries of chemical properties, environmental toxicology concepts, and links to information of specific interest to reporters such as environmental regulations.

This unique collaboration of journalism and science has proved to be an effective method of outreach to reporters responsible for educating the public about complex scientific information that is difficult to understand. Detjen, who also founded the U.S. Society of Environmental Journalists and served as its first president, says, “Journalists and scientists must work together to help educate the public about complex scientific and environmental issues. Our institute is working to help improve the communications between these two groups.”

New Mexico, the only national competition for environmental engineers. About 30 teams participating in the contest and MSU competes right at the top: the first year (1993) they took third place; they won first place in 1994 and 1995. The 1996 and 1997 teams took third place. Winning is great, of course, and the prizes help the next year’s team finance their trip. Students tackle a real-life environmental problem and are judged on how well that task is completed as well as on formal presentations of their methods and solutions.

As support grew, the team benefited from collaboration with faculty from the Eli Broad School of Business and Management, the departments of Geology, Agricultural Engineering, Crop and Soil Science, the Cytotron, and the Office of Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Safety (ORCBS). Teams included students from other departments, including Communications, Resource Development, and Crop and Soil Sciences.

Masten emphasizes that building sensitivity and awareness of citizen needs is critical to developing engineers who understand more than the science of the environment. This knowledge has been directly applied out reach grant from the NIEHS/EPA Superfund Basic Research Program. The institute has also been supported by grants from the George Gund and Helmut Stern Foundations.

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Reflceting on her community work, Masten says, “The WERC project emerged as the outreach activity closest to my heart. It’s where I take current scholarly knowledge gained to students in my other courses. It’s how to apply regulations to cleanup designs, and correcting dysfunctional team behaviors so that people’s health is directly affected by our technical world around it.”

Summer Arts Outreach Programs

MSU’s campus echoes with sounds of performance art:

(Continued from pg. 3)

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