

THE GENERAL COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

Access

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

General College

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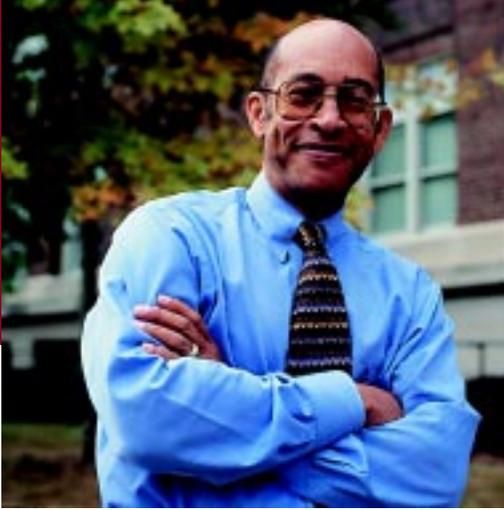
Volume 1, Number 3

SPRING 2002

Opening doors, reaching out to immigrant students

*A tutoring session in the "Dugsi" program—
a Somali word for both education and shelter*





From the Dean

Dean David V. Taylor

FOCUS ON

GC and immigrant communities

One of the least recognized but most effective educational services that the General College provides is the Commanding English program. This program is designed to help nonnative speakers of English develop English proficiency skills sufficient to compete academically. Over the past 23 years, Commanding English has assisted new Americans from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds access the University of Minnesota and its many educational programs.

Our ties to the Southeast Asian community and the East African community have been particularly strong in recent years. In addition to providing a well-structured English as a Second Language program on campus, General College has established satellite programs in area high schools with large immigrant student enrollments. We have found that by provid-

ing language skills training earlier, students could access a greater range of postsecondary options. In some instances we have met with elders in those communities to ascertain what their perceived needs are for English proficiency training.

This issue of *Access* focuses on our relationship with immigrant communities. We are pleased to have been able to assist so many students who, in spite of adversities experienced in their lives, have taught us what patience, persistence, and a strong work ethic will accomplish. These students have reinforced our belief in what a pluralistic society can be. They have also had an impact upon the General College. Issues that have informed their lives have helped us to appreciate more fully our role and responsibility as part of the land-grant legacy of the University of Minnesota.

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"General College Model" recognized as nationally outstanding

Following some elected officials voicing public misconceptions about General College last spring, GC history professor **David Ghere** was moved to write an opinion piece that was published in the August 9, 2001, St. Paul Pioneer Press. We publish excerpts here (with permission from the Pioneer Press) because the article so well describes our current mission and accomplishments.

[Some] with outdated memories of General College from 15 years ago claim GC does not belong at a research university. Strange!

The University of California at Berkeley has a developmental education program. Harvard was the first university in the country to establish a program for at-risk students. Today, General College sponsors a research center, hosts research conferences, and publishes a research monograph series. GC faculty members are active in their academic disciplines as well as a variety of educational organizations, presenting at national conferences, publishing journal articles, and serving as editors and editorial board members.

The General College was given a new mission in 1987: to conduct research concerning effective methods to develop the academic capabilities of underprepared and at-risk students, to apply that research knowledge in teaching those students at the General College, and to disseminate that knowledge nationally in the academic community. Today, General College is recognized as the most outstanding program of its kind in the country.

GC provides an alternative to traditional instruction for underprepared or at-risk students by incorporating developmental goals and strategies into the design of a wide variety of typical freshman-level content courses. These courses conform to traditional disciplinary expectations

about content and rigor, while utilizing instructional methods and assignments, which develop student reading, writing, and study skills. This innovative "General College Model" is being presented at national conferences and in publications as an alternative to traditional instruction. Several other universities have sent representatives to observe our research, teaching, advising, and administration.

General College's accomplishments have brought national acclaim General College's preeminence is the result of the guidance of Dean David V. Taylor and the foresight and judgment of the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota. Five years ago, then-University President Nils Hasselmo proposed to close General College, citing its high cost of instruction and poor academic performance. This effort generated great political controversy because it contradicted the university's commitment to access and diversity.

While these issues concerned the Board of Regents, they also received information that undermined Hasselmo's justifications for the closing. Financial analysis revealed that closing GC would have saved the university very little money, if any, and General College's academic performance had improved dramatically since receiving its research mission in 1987. The Board of Regents saw that GC had the potential to become a national leader in developmental education.

GC's recent recognition as the most outstanding program in the country is justification for the faith, foresight, and judgment of the Board of Regents. Old memories die hard. But in 2001, General College is leading the nation in teaching, advising, and research in its assigned field.

David Ghere is an associate professor of history in the General College.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



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On the Cover Minneapolis Roosevelt High School junior Farhan Aden and volunteer "U" tutor/mentor Leah Schenkenberg meet after school to work on his academic literacy skills, part of GC's Dugsi Project (see page 7). Photo by Scott Cohen.

The General College newsletter, *Access*, has received a **Circle of Excellence Silver Medal** in the Periodicals Publishing Improvement category from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), based in Washington, D.C. Twenty-one entries were judged in the category; one silver and two bronze medals were awarded.

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As was the case a century ago, immigration to the United States is again an important phenomenon. The 2000 U.S. census shows that one in five Americans—56 million—is either foreign born or has at least one parent who is.

In Minnesota the percentages are lower, but still significant. Close to half a million Minnesotans are foreign-born or first generation, about 10 percent of the population. The former Soviet Union, Somalia, Bosnia, Mexico, India, and South-east Asia are the primary areas of origin.

Access for students from Minnesota's refugee and immigrant communities has long been an important part of the General College mission, which we explore in the following pages.



Tutor Andrea Bilotta and high school freshman Natasha Bishop, originally from Guyana.

Commanding English continues tradition of access

Photos by Scott Cohen

Trung came from Vietnam via Holland, needing to learn English and transfer her experience as a math teacher in her home country to a new career in the United States. General College created a path for this nontraditional student, and next year she plans to graduate from the Carlson School of Management.

“Abdi” is graduating from high school this year, having taken two years of postsecondary work in the Commanding English program at Edison; with three scholarships under his belt, he feels well supported to start at the University this fall. “Without Commanding English at Edison I would not even think I could go to college,” he said.

The outreach director of the University's Somali student association began his connections with the University through the Dugsi tutoring project. Now a junior majoring in biology, Yassin works with high schools in Minneapolis to help other African students find a path to higher education. As he tells students, “General College can open your eyes to education.”

Stories like these could fill this magazine: how General College opened a door, reached out, and assisted students with the academic language and education needed for success in a new culture.

Access for students from Minnesota's refugee and immigrant communities has long been an important part of the General College mission. When the first large immigration of South-east Asian refugees to Minnesota began in the late 1970s, General College responded by creating the Pilot Educational Project, offering language classes and academic support so that Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese students could succeed at the University. This evolved into the Commanding English program, now in its 23rd year, and a national model.

Traditional English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are often noncredit and isolated from the standard college curriculum with courses in reading, writing, and speaking. In contrast, Commanding English builds language and academic support into a normal freshman-year curriculum. It offers reading instruction connected to anthropology, human anatomy, sociology, and arts/humanities courses, so that students can earn the college credit and gain the education of the freshman year, while also receiving assistance with reading

skill and vocabulary development that benefits a student's reading in a second language.

“General College has been an ideal site for these outreach programs,” Commanding English director Robin Murie said. “Because class size is small and advising is personal, students can find connections to faculty and advisers who care about their progress and encourage participation in the GC community.” A number of Commanding English students have participated in other GC programs, such as the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. Others have worked in the Academic Resource Center or as peer advisers and, in general, have been encouraged to pursue activities that help them make connections, Murie said. “People throughout GC welcome diversity in ways that larger, less personal colleges cannot. All of this works to create an environment where second-language students can find a voice, an education, and a path to their major at the University.”

What was once primarily a program of Southeast Asian students now has increasing numbers of students from East Africa (Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Oromia) and Eastern Europe. This year 50 freshmen are enrolled in Commanding English; Murie expects 60 next year.

Recent attention in the field of ESL has been given to the needs of “generation 1.5” students—students who were born in one country but have now lived much of their lives in the United States, who may still need English language support, but for whom traditional ESL programs are not always the best fit.

High School Outreach

Support for students in the first year of college is important. But what about students who might not consider college as an option in the first place? A talented high school student from a language background other than English does not always have access to college preparation courses in high school, courses that demand substantial amounts of reading, writing, and academic literacy. Over a decade ago, General College made connections with Edison High School in Minneapolis and designed a program to offer Commanding English courses to high school juniors and seniors through postsecondary

options. Thus began the first Commanding English outreach partnership. Every year now for 11 years, Edison has graduated between 15 and 21 second-language students who have taken college-level courses—basic writing, immigration literature, and cultural anthropology—with the support of reading and writing adjunct classes through Commanding English. These high school students graduate with significant

scholarship support and enter college with a clear understanding of how to write from sources, how to study, and how to manage large reading loads—with confidence that they can take the next step. A similar outreach partnership, now in its fourth year, has been established at Roosevelt High School, where over a third of the 15–20 students speak English as a second, third, or even fourth language.

Dugsi Project

Ibrahim Ayeh and Mohamed Osman, two Somali elders and high school teachers in Minneapolis, approached the University five years ago, seeking ways to make connections for recently arrived African teenagers. Within a few meetings, the Commanding English program was brought to the table, and with the assistance of the Career

and Community Learning Center (formerly OSLO—Office of Special Learning Opportunities), and funding from VISTA, a tutoring program was established. For the full story on Dugsi, a Somali word meaning “school” or “shelter,” see page 7.

ESL for Adults in the Community

Last year, Mohamed Osman came back to General College, requesting outreach for adults in the community who have a high school diploma from outside the United States, and so did not get the kinds of orientation to higher education that students in high schools in this country receive. General College, with generous funding from the Wallin Foundation, is now piloting an evening course, GC 0201, English for

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—Robin Murie, Commanding English director

Exploring the immigrant experience through fiction and film

The United States, a land of immigrants, is reflected in the General College community, many of whom are either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. In the past, the United States was described as a “melting pot” into which immigrants were assimilated, but today we seek to retain and value our individual and cultural differences.

“It is important for students in GC to understand why for centuries people from diverse heritages have chosen to leave their homes to immigrate to the United States, and to recognize the contributions of immigrants to American culture,” said GC Professor Jeanne Higbee. As a vehicle to accomplish this understanding, Higbee sought to create a freshman seminar that met the University’s diversity graduation requirement and also incorporated the writing-intensive requirement. The result is “Celebrating Diversity in Twentieth-Century America through Fiction and Film,” in which students explore the immigrant experience through a variety of media. Although most students who take the course are not recent immigrants, the proportions have been changing and vary from semester to semester, section to section. “‘Word of mouth’ has a big influence over who signs up for my class,” Higbee said. “Last summer one of the orientation leaders had taken two courses from me and really talked up the seminar. As a result, in the fall I had one section with quite a few Hmong students. But I have taught students from many heritages since I began at GC.”

While she was still teaching at the University of Georgia, Higbee proposed and planned the seminar long distance in anticipation of arriving to teach at the University. “My research with developmental students at Georgia indicated that they preferred to learn through visual and interactive means rather than through reading texts and listening to lectures,” she said. Students still do need to read for the seminar, however. “I liked the idea of assigning short stories rather than longer fiction,” Higbee said. When one of her students lent her a magazine with a review of *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, edited by John Updike, she found her text. Through the stories in the Updike text and novels of their own choosing, students gain awareness of the sometimes nightmarish components of the American dream.

One of the most popular films in the class is *Far and Away*, directed by Ron Howard, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman (Universal, 1991). Students discuss questions like how being “owned” by the ward bosses in Boston compared to being subjugated by the wealthy landowners in Ireland. After viewing *Snow Falling on Cedars* (Universal, 2000), students examine why Japanese citizens who had lived in the United States for several generations were still treated like foreigners and even spies during World War II and were interned in concentration camps, while their German counterparts were not.

Many of the themes of the films discussed in class demonstrate that some aspects of the immigrant experience have not changed significantly over the past century. This realization can assist students in developing empathy for the challenges and barriers faced by some immigrants.

COMMANDING ENGLISH, from page 5

College Readiness. In this class, 15–20 students work on academic reading and writing around a curriculum of college information: financial aid, majors and careers, college courses and requirements, surveying a college textbook and guest lecture, testing, and student life. The goal of the course is to assist potential students with academic preparation and practical knowledge about higher education.

College Connections Program

This year, as part of a University Promise Fellows project, General College has been able to hire two undergraduate students, Abdirahman Adan and Bashir Hassan, both alumni of the Commanding English program, to visit high school juniors and seniors who are interested in exploring the University of Minnesota. The pair have been busy all year making connections with high school students: arranging campus visits, answering questions, bringing University students out to the high schools to talk about what college is like, and holding office hours when students can call with their questions. A first-generation college student who has been in the United States for only four or five years does not have access to many adults who can answer questions about where and how to go to college. College Connections seeks to help students “see themselves” as potential college students and to offer assistance with the maze of application forms, testing, financial aid forms, deadlines, and doubts that crop up along the way.

Hassan and Adan can also vouch for Commanding English’s benefits. Hassan, who will soon graduate with majors in international relations and political science, recalls the pleasure he felt when he found he could write better essays than his CLA classmates. “In Commanding English we were taught how to take a position in writing and then defend it,” he said. Adan, an IT computer science major, was good at math and science when he came to the University, but thanks to writing 17 papers in two semesters in Commanding English, he did well in English classes too.



Minneapolis Roosevelt High School student Aweys Hussein checks in with Nanda Warren, Dugsi program associate, during an after-school tutoring session in Blegen Hall.

DUGSI TUTORING PROJECT

Building a college connection for Somali youth

In the wake of the devastating civil war in Somalia, Minnesota has witnessed a significant increase in the number of Somali students entering the public schools. Some arrived in the United States having experienced long gaps in their formal education after years living in refugee camps. Because Somali refugees are a relatively new population in Minnesota, there are few organizations to ensure their success in this new culture. General College hosts one such program.

“Dugsi,” a Somali word for both education and shelter, is the name of an after-school tutoring/mentoring program that brings Somali and other English Language Learner (ELL) students together with volunteer University of Minnesota tutors to build academic literacy skills. When members of the Somali community turned to the University for help in creating this new project, General College seemed a natural site. GC is the home of Commanding English, an English-language acquisition program at the University with a strong record of partnerships with Minneapolis high schools. (See related article on page 4.)

Recently—at the request of members of the Somali community—Dugsi expanded to a second tutoring site, at Washburn High School. Nanda Warren, program associate for Dugsi, says this is an “exciting development. I love the fact that the idea for expansion comes from the community itself. We know our work is having an impact.”

Dugsi’s goal is to strengthen the bridge between high school and college for high-potential students who are learning English. High school juniors and seniors are paired with college students in an afternoon tutoring program twice a week. Dugsi is more than a “homework help” program—students use journaling and other nonthreatening, yet college-style assignments in a supportive environment. Without the pressure of earning a grade, students can comfortably make mistakes in their writing and develop a stronger voice.



The one-on-one support of weekly tutoring sessions with a mentor who can help answer cultural as well as academic questions is invaluable. Tutors and students work on lessons geared to increase study skills needed to succeed academically as well as working on practice materials for the Minnesota High School Basic Standards test. In addition, the high school students have many questions for the tutors about “how college works” that family members are unable to answer.

For the tutors, many of whom are aspiring teachers, it is an opportunity to explore the field and connect to someone from another culture. “Working with Dugsi was a life-changing experience,” tutor Jordan Stein said. “Similar to many great friendships, my weekly sessions resulted in my learning more than I taught,” Rachel Wodele, another tutor, said.

In addition to overcoming barriers, Dugsi students also have many strengths: they are often more mature, with a deeper sense of purpose and belief in the powers of higher education. And Dugsi students may know several languages fluently and bring firsthand knowledge of different cultures and perspectives from around the world. “The students are amazing—very dedicated, hard-working, and all with so much character!” said tutor Sara Schmid.

Critical to the future of the Somali community is the need to move its youth forward, to gain access to professional jobs and careers. The students themselves have high aspirations. Even though many of them have high academic potential, the language barrier often prevents them from being categorized as “college material.” Dugsi provides the mentoring and academic preparation needed to make transition to higher education a possibility for these enthusiastic students. —Lori Anne Williams

Xo

VANG



By Christen Christopherson

Just as Wisconsin became his family's second home after leaving Laos, General College has become Xo (pronounced zoh) Vang's "second home." Vang began his college career in GC and now works as a peer adviser for current GC students while he pursues an urban forestry major and information technology minor in the College of Natural Resources.

Vang is from Neenah, Wisconsin, where the town's major industry is making paper. He says his choice of major (after exploring electrical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, and paper science) is based on his love for the outdoors combined with his desire to stay in a city. "I have always loved trees. In fact I did my first speech on trees back in ninth grade!" he laughed.

Vang will be the first in his family to complete a college degree, an accomplishment he says he owes to the encouragement of his family. His family immigrated from Laos to Wisconsin in 1984 when he was only four. Vang is the middle child of seven, and they all live near Neenah, where his parents live and work. Choosing to leave them for the Twin Cities was a difficult decision, but an uncle in the Twin Cities helped Vang adjust to life away from home. "In part, I wanted to leave Wisconsin to see how I would do being away from family," he said. "I wanted to see new places. But having family here really helped."

Being in GC helped too. "The faculty and the staff" are what Vang said he liked best about being in General College. "I liked the advising I got, I liked the one-on-one attention I got in class, I liked getting to know my classmates in a small setting," he said.

Vang had a very close relationship with his high school counselor, and he looked for the same attention from his GC academic adviser, Tabitha Grier. "She helped me figure out my major through all those changes, asked me questions about my life and my future. Tabitha even helped find me this job!" Vang said. "I had a good experience here, and that's why I'm still here," he said, referring to his peer adviser job. In that position, he is asked to give advice to new GC students. His best advice: "If you don't know—ask! I was always shy until I came to the 'U.' I figured out I had to be more vocal to make it here. If you're more vocal, express your feelings, ask questions, you're better off."

Vang took his own advice and got to know Dean David Taylor. They met one day in the halls of Appleby, and Vang introduced himself. "I had never met a dean before, and I thought it was cool that he was so approachable." They decided to get together for lunch (which Vang notes *he* bought)! "We discovered we're very alike, and he gave me some pointers on how to get through my own struggles."

Vang, now a junior, intends to graduate in fall 2003. But in the meantime, he is enjoying his work in GC. "Faculty and staff treat us students like a person, a member of the team. It's not like they are always behind a desk. This place is my second home."

By Debra Hartley

In 1978, at the age of two, Phuoc (Felix) Nguyen left Vietnam with his family. He has no memory of his birth country. That will change this May when, funded by a scholarship provided by Dean David Taylor, Nguyen will return to Vietnam to study its literature and culture with a Global Campus seminar led by General College Professor Jill Gidmark.

Nguyen's family moved to the Twin Cities in 1984. His understanding of his Vietnamese heritage comes completely from family stories, Americanized Vietnamese culture, and mainstream American culture. He knows that he has missed much. According to the essay he wrote to apply for the scholarship, this lack of direct knowledge has always given him "a deep sense of loss."

Hearing about Gidmark's study-abroad seminar, "Literature in Vietnam: Folklore & Magic, Prisons & Temples," filled Nguyen "with a sense of purpose." He wrote, "The opportunity to visit my homeland would give my life a certain meaning that I cannot find anywhere else; it would be the missing piece of my identity." Studying Vietnamese literature and culture firsthand, he said, would provide him with "insights into Vietnamese attitudes and beliefs from an inside perspective."

Besides a feeling of deep personal satisfaction, the experience would also allow him to bring something back, he stated. "I feel that I can bring something back to so many other Vietnamese immigrants who, like myself, feel disconnected with American culture. I will be able to witness in person what I and so many others have lost since coming to this country, and with the experiences and knowledge I gain, will contribute to making the American culture which I have adopted far richer and more diverse."

The three-credit seminar takes place from May 22 to June 15. According to its description, the program "combines the interpretive power of literature with firsthand experience to produce a richly textured introduction to Vietnamese culture."

Students will be based in Hanoi and will learn both in the classroom and through field study trips within and outside of Hanoi. Local trips will include visits to the Old Quarter, the Temple of Literature, pagodas, prisons, and the theatre.

A special feature of the class will be visits from Vietnamese authors whose works are required reading in the course. Gidmark, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Professor of Literature and Writing, developed the University of Minnesota's first stand-alone course in Asian American literature, which she still teaches in GC, and which Nguyen had previously taken.

This is the first time Global Campus has sent a group to Hanoi. They invited Gidmark to lead the Vietnam seminar because of her experience teaching the many refugee students in General College, and her research and writing on contemporary Asian American authors. She visited Vietnam last summer in preparation as part of a Faculty Development seminar.

Gidmark asked Dean Taylor if he might fund a General College Dean's Scholarship to pay the complete expenses for one GC student to attend the seminar. This is the second such scholarship; the first went to Kirsten Collins, a student in Professor Mark Pedely's Global Campus seminar, "The Cultural History of Mexico through Art, Artifact, and Performance."

Several second-generation Vietnamese students applied for the scholarship, Gidmark said, each of whom would have been worthy, but when she got to Nguyen's essay, which she read last of all, she "got goose bumps" and knew the scholarship was his.

When Nguyen found out that he had won the scholarship, he "jumped up and down," he remembers with a big smile. Now he's looking forward to May.

Nguyen's mother is now visiting in Vietnam and will still be there when he arrives in May. After the seminar ends they will travel through the end of June to places connected to their family history. He believes that when he returns he will be changed. He will return with memories of his birth country and a new, firsthand "understanding of the Vietnamese way of life," something, he says, "I have been searching for all my life."

DEAN'S SCHOLARSHIP funds return to land of his birth



While studying literature in Vietnam, Felix Nguyen and Professor Jill Gidmark will view a traditional folk dance featuring a larger version of this water puppet.

GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

Three GC professors introduce a cultural

By Laura Weber

Photos by Scott Cohen

Ghosts are lurking in Appleby Hall this spring. No, not the spirits of long-gone metallurgy students (Appleby Hall was originally the home of the mines and metallurgy department). Rather, “ghost stories” are being used by three General College professors, Walt Jacobs, Mark Pedelty, and Tom Reynolds, to introduce their students to the cultural studies approach to sociology, humanities, and writing.

Cultural studies critically examines the “texts” produced by a culture. These texts range from artifacts, such as popular music and films, to practices, such as gender relations and consumer activity. Though cultural studies has become established in the academy over the past two or three decades, to teach it in a developmental education setting such as General College is rare, says Pedelty, who teaches the humanities course.

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary approach that, according to Pedelty, is presented to students as “a way of thinking.” Jacobs, who teaches sociology, notes that “cultural studies tries to get students to think about larger issues.” And Reynolds, who teaches writing, adds: “We show students it is a tool they can actually make use of in their lives.”

Jacobs came up with the metaphor of “ghost stories” as a means to introduce students to techniques of observing, then analyzing, the often hidden dynamics behind cultural products. Jacobs describes his Educational Storytelling Project (ESP) as “a way to revive the dying art of storytelling.” As students tell their own stories through a variety of assignments, they become aware of “ghosts,” that is, invisible social forces that strongly, but unconsciously, shape their lives.



Wing Ho, Rob Soeun, and Stephanie Tulien create masks for their performance of “Who Killed Ophelia?”

Pedelty and Reynolds, sharing Jacobs’ interest in cultural studies, have joined him in using ESP in their courses this spring. They hope to ultimately combine the three courses into an interdisciplinary package course called “Introduction to Cultural Studies,” where what students learn in one course will refer to, and build on, what they learn in the others. About 10 students are taking all three courses this spring and more are taking two of the three. Students Thomas Love and Ny Cao say they see the connections in the three courses and that “it’s coming together.” Said Pedelty, “The students we share have formed a solid and enthusiastic core, positively influencing the rest of their classmates with the ideas they’ve developed. It appears to be a more integrated and meaningful learning experience for them.” Casi-Anna Hodgson agrees: “I was happy to see that General College was offering this,” she said.

People and Problems—Walt Jacobs

In Jacobs’ sociology course, “People and Problems,” students must place their personal experiences within larger social frameworks, as well as interpret the workings of social structures through their personal perspectives. These activities are, Jacobs feels, at the “epicenter” of General College’s developmental mission: “Students learn not only sociological content and perspectives, they learn techniques for applying their new insights to their lives both inside and outside the academy,” he writes in the course syllabus.

Early this semester, Jacobs’ lesson for the day was the concept of “stratification,” the unequal distribution of social resources and rewards based on social group membership. Students watched a clip from the movie, *I Like It*

studies approach to their disciplines

Like That, which portrayed a white man's attempt to use a Hispanic woman as "bait" to sign a hip-hop group to his record label. Rather than accepting his view of her as a sex object, she successfully proves that she has talent and expertise that can benefit his business. Afterward, students wrote down their general reactions and sociological reactions to what they saw, particularly how the scene illustrated stratification. They swapped papers and discussed their reactions. Jacobs then presented a brief lecture on stratification and social group membership to the students, who were now actively engaged. "Two big points," concluded Jacobs' lecture: "Social group membership matters, and membership is a social construction."

Identity, Community, and Culture: Connections in Arts and Humanities—Mark Pedelty

The only text for Pedelty's course, "Identity, Community, and Culture: Connections in Arts and Humanities," is a copy of *Hamlet*. Yes, students read the play and watch multiple film versions of this ubiquitous cultural icon. However, the final exam is not a term paper but a full-scale performance of their own creation—props and costumes included—called "Who Killed Ophelia?"

A ghost does of course play a major role in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but Pedelty is asking students to use the play as a critical canvas to examine "ghosts" from their own recent past—the cultural identities and social experiences of high school—and draw on them to interpret the text. Ophelia becomes the main character. The students will act out Ophelia's five scenes, trying to answer questions about gender, social status, and kinship. "In other words, we will be using *Hamlet* as a way of raising important questions about the nature of contemporary existence," Pedelty's syllabus states.

The students decided on identities for each character during a spirited brainstorming session. Suggestions for Ophelia's identity included loner, closet alcoholic, and valedictorian. The winning identity, however, was "goth chick" (as in the



Diana Watters



Top Walt Jacobs came up with the "ghost stories" metaphor as a way to introduce students to a cultural studies approach to his sociology course.

Center Tom Reynolds, with students Charles Feders and Katie MacRunnels, teaches writing, as well as the role it plays in constructing culture.

Bottom Mark Pedelty is asking students to examine questions of identity as they stage a production based on *Hamlet*, set in a present-day American high school.



CONTINUED on next page

Students are using *Hamlet* as a critical canvas to examine “ghosts” from their recent past.

“gothic” high school subculture, where kids dress like the “living dead” with dark makeup and black clothes).

Suggestions for Ophelia’s father, Polonius, ranged from Vietnam vet to used-car salesman. The class finally agreed he would be portrayed as a school principal, creating another identity for Ophelia, “principal’s daughter.”

Pedely says that, by using *Hamlet* to explore intersections of identity and society, “the goal is not simply to understand the world but to develop humane and expressive methods for changing it.” Working with Pedely is Heather Dorsey, a professional director and University graduate student.

Communicating in Society: Writing About Our Shopping Habit—Tom Reynolds

Reynolds also has broad goals. Rather than just teach his students how to write effectively, he aims to show them the important role that “reading” and “writing” play in constructing culture. This semester’s focus is on shopping and American culture. Rather than take for granted everyday institutions such as shopping malls, students learn to “read” the act of shopping for its important, yet sometimes “ghostlike,” messages, including how buying and consuming help form our ideas about what is “normal” and thus shape our identities. “Who, or what, creates the ‘needs’ that the mall seems to fill?” Reynolds wonders.

Reynolds is interested in “interrupting some of the traditional practices in writing instruction,” pointing to the gap between students’ actual experiences and what we usually ask them to do in writing courses. “Generating enthusiasm for learning to write better begins with convincing students that they are already involved in significant writing and communication practices in their everyday lives,” he says. “I try to get students to consider what they have to contribute to the fairly lively conversation that is now going on among academic scholars in the area of consumer culture.”

Faculty also expand horizons

It’s not just students who are benefiting from the cultural studies classes’ cross-pollination. The collaboration has expanded the trio’s awareness of each other’s work and is part of a burgeoning movement to create more internal interactions across disciplines by some members of the General College faculty.

“We are trying to do on a small scale what cultural studies attempts on a larger scale: to create a conversation between disciplines around important contemporary issues,” Pedely says.

“Cultural studies encourages geographers to talk to anthropologists, and sociologists to talk to literary scholars, and so on, about pressing social questions. Similarly, by working across disciplinary boundaries at GC we can facilitate more critical and creative thought. Students often tell me about what they are doing in the other classes and have done a good job of relating what they learn in Walt’s and Tom’s classes to their work in my class. I wouldn’t really know what Walt or Tom were doing in their classes if we had not attempted this linkage and if we did not share students in common.”



Reynolds, Jacobs, and Pedely are also conducting research on their cultural studies endeavors. The University’s Office of the Vice President for Research awarded Reynolds and Jacobs 2002 Faculty Summer Research Fellowships of \$5,000 each. Reynolds, who received an additional \$5,000 matching grant from the McKnight Summer Fellowship, is studying the origins of the college composition course in America. He contends that the origins can be understood by examining the parallel cultural development of the youth-oriented, mass-market magazine industry of the period. Jacobs’ fellowship will be applied to a book he is writing on undergraduate students’ information age-literacy. He also received a \$6,855 President’s Faculty Multicultural Research Award for the same project. And Jacobs’ research assistant, Wing Ho, received a \$1,400 Undergraduate Research grant to assist Jacobs with the ESP storytelling project. Pedely and Jacobs presented a poster session about the ESP project in early April at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association in New Orleans.

GC NEWS NOTES

Taylor and Collins win University service awards

Dean David V. Taylor is one of six honorees of the 2002 University of Minnesota Outstanding Community Service Award. The award recognizes Dean Taylor's contributions to improving the community, particularly his commitment to local youth.

The award announcement reads:

With a focus on youth, Dean Taylor's community service activities, centering on housing, health, nutrition and education, span a wide range of communities and agencies and have touched the lives of thousands of young people in the Twin Cities area. For example, he has worked for affordable housing through Hope Community, a nonprofit community development agency serving the Phillips neighborhood; mentored and tutored elementary school children; worked at a local food shelf; and worked to advance the socioeconomic welfare of young African American males through the Hennepin County African American Men Project.

Professor Terry Collins, director of Academic Affairs and Curriculum for General College, is one of 12 recipients of the President's Award for Outstanding Service. The award was established in 1997 to recognize faculty and staff who have provided exceptional service to the University. This award is presented each year in the spring and honors active or retired faculty or staff



members who have gone well beyond their regular duties and have demonstrated an unusual commitment to the University community. The award will be formally presented by President Yudof at the May 10 meeting of the Board of Regents.

General College receives Outstanding Unit Award for "best practices" for P&A employees

General College has received the Outstanding Unit Award by the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (CAPA). According to David Johnson of CAPA, General College was selected for "best practices" in its management of its professional academic and administrative staff (P&As), which can serve as a role model to the rest of the University. Units were judged on their organization and the practices they use for enhancing the careers and morale of their P&A employees. The award includes \$1,000 for professional development for P&A activities in General College.

Patti Neiman wins John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising

Patricia J. (Patti) Neiman, counselor-advocate and coordinator of General College's Transfer and Career Center, won the John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising this spring. Only four Tate awards are awarded campus-wide each year. Tate Awards serve to recognize and reward high-quality academic advising, identify professional models, and celebrate the role that academic advising plays in the University's educational mission.



Neiman's colleagues describe her as "bringing a passion and genuineness that makes a strong impression on her students and on the colleagues who observe her." Very early in her career, Neiman began a successful effort to expand the Transfer and Career Center, moving it to a central location in the building. "In all the dimensions of her active career in advising and counseling at the University of Minnesota, Patti Neiman exemplifies academic advising at its best," her nomination states.

Neiman, who holds a bachelor's degree from General College, is the fifth GC adviser to win the Tate award. The award is sponsored by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost and is named in honor of John Tate, professor of physics and first dean of University College (1930–41).

Upward Bound students "Beat the Odds"

Upward Bound is proud to announce that three of its program participants have received \$2,000 scholarships in the annual Children's Defense Fund–Minnesota's Beat the Odds Awards program. **Gregory Clark** and **Jeanine Jackson**, nominated by **Aloida Zaragoza**, Upward Bound director, and **Donnie Belcher**, nominated by her high school, are the recipients. Gregory, Jeanine, and Donnie are among only five scholarship winners selected from more than eighty participants in this year's program. Participants in the Beat the Odds program, nominated by schools and agencies, are Minneapolis-St. Paul high school seniors who have overcome exceptional challenges to become personally and academically successful. The Children's Defense Fund–Minnesota works to improve the lives of Minnesota's children through education, research, and advocacy. For more information, see the Children's Defense Fund–Minnesota Web site at www.cdf-mn.org.



TIFFANY ENRIQUEZ

By Christen Christopherson

Tiffany Enriquez still remembers sitting in her freshman General College classes in 1998 and wondering, “Why do these professors want to know what I think? Don’t they just want to know what the author said?” It was the challenging thinking and dialogue she found here that whetted her appetite for more learning, which the CLA student and GC peer adviser has appeased through a host of learning opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom.

The travel bug bit the year after high school graduation. After a trip to Mexico sponsored by Rotary International, Tiffany was ready for the “Big Place”—the University of Minnesota. “I wanted to be anonymous—a number. But you don’t get to be that in GC.” Once she left GC, she realized how much she had liked it—“for being an access point to the U, for giving opportunities to those who don’t fit the ‘cookie cutter’ admissions mold. There was room for explanations, for experiences, for people like me.”

Enriquez transferred to CLA before she had a major: “I couldn’t choose just one thing!” she said. “I had too many interests and I would rather be in school for eight years and get three majors.” Ultimately, she chose an

independently designed interdepartmental major combining Spanish, art, and social studies courses, with a focus on social justice themes. “If I had to name my major it would be something like ‘social change through art with some Spanish!’” she laughed.

Enriquez has been a role model for GC students as a peer adviser and assisting GC admissions officer Rudy Hernández. “I wanted to work in an environment where, as a student employee, I was encouraged to learn and improve my skills,” she said. “I appreciate GC’s commitment to students. Even if a student needs help and doesn’t know it, I have full faith I can send them somewhere in the college and know that they will be served well.”

Enriquez’s educational journey has spread beyond the traditional classroom. She took a semester off from formal studies to travel and work in Peru. She organized her own volunteer work with a nongovernmental agency helping women start their own businesses and empower them to lead their families toward financial stability.

Upon returning to the University, Enriquez spent a term with the City Arts program, through the Higher Education Consortium of Urban Affairs. “This was a great experience because I used to think

I was the only one who thought art and social change were connected,” she said. “I’m interested in the kind of art where emphasis is placed on the creative process rather than only on the product.” At the same time, she taught at a native arts charter high school in Minneapolis. “Art and culture were incorporated into all aspects of learning,” she said.

Last summer she was a McNair Scholar, working on a research project under the direction of Dr. Samuel L. Myers, Jr., of the Humphrey Institute, on “The Intersection of Race and Welfare in Child Maltreatment Cases.”

After graduating this spring, Tiffany plans to work for Teach America, which works in large urban or very remotely rural schools that have a hard time attracting teachers. “It is my responsibility to give back,” Enriquez said. “I didn’t think that I wanted to work in a traditional classroom, but I learned from my City Arts experience that I must work with high school students. They are so neglected but it is such an influential age. A lot of kids dwell in this dangerous time and they need good role models who care about their success.”

It all fits with Tiffany’s view of her role in the world. “I always knew I needed to do something to make life more livable, enjoyable, and easy for people. I come from a family with a single mom and three kids, and others were always helping us. I saw kindness in people’s hearts. It is my responsibility, and I am passionate about giving that back.”

Study shows most former GC undergrads were satisfied with GC experiences

By Cathrine Wambach

Most former General College students who are now enrolled in other University colleges were satisfied with their GC experiences and would enroll again, if they were now beginning college, according to a recent survey conducted by GC's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE). Since the core mission of GC is to prepare students for successful transfer to other U of M colleges, this is good news.

The study contacted via e-mail 1,329 students who entered GC between 1995 and 2000, later transferred to another University of Minnesota college, and were still enrolled at the University. (The Web-based survey was completed by 425 students.) The successful transferees were asked a variety of questions about their past experiences with GC and current experiences at the University. ORE researchers were especially interested to learn how confident the students were about their academic skills and what, if any, barriers they believed might interfere with their goal of graduating from the University.

Among the features of GC that students liked the best were mid-semester grade reports, small classes, access to math and writing tutoring, frequent contact with advisers, and the emphasis on cultural diversity. The students expressed high levels of confidence in their academic skills, especially using computers, reading, working in groups, and choosing courses. They were slightly less confident about their math skills and their time management skills.

While former GC students expressed satisfaction with their GC experiences, that satisfaction was tainted by experiences of feeling devalued by other University students. The issue is particularly salient for the students from the 1995 and 1996 cohorts who were enrolled in GC when public discussion over possibly closing the college occurred. It is clear that GC students resent any implication that they do not belong at the University.

Eighty-five percent of respondents were highly confident that they would graduate from the University. The barrier most often identified by students was access to courses (25 percent indicated the barrier was high or very high). Timely access to important courses is an important determinant of the length of time it takes students to graduate. The second highest rated barrier was lack of financial aid (20 percent, high or very high). In addition, 19 percent of the respondents identified personal debt as a high or very high barrier. The failure of grant-based financial aid to keep up with the rapidly rising cost of education is reflected in these responses. Efforts on the part of University administrators to address issues related to course access and financial aid could contribute to improved graduation rates for all University students.

"A Survey of Former General College Students" by Cathrine Wambach, Jennifer Hatfield, Mike Merabella, and Jennifer Franko, is available at www.gen.umn.edu/research/ore/transfer_survey.htm.

Cathrine Wambach is director of General College's Office of Research and Evaluation. She was recently awarded the Horace T. Morse–Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. (See page 16.)

In their own words

This year, Dean David V. Taylor received unsolicited letters of appreciation for General College from sophomore Mara Heck and Sandra and Timothy Eggenberger of Mankato, parents of senior Angela Eggenberger. Both students began their University careers in General College. With their permission, we reprint excerpts from their letters.

Angela Eggenberger is about to graduate from the College of Human Ecology and begin an internship in New York City.

"We strongly believe that Angela's success and graduation from the University of Minnesota is due to the advisers and faculty from General College She has loved her experience at the University and has actively recruited many other students to the U of M Angela has returned to her high school counselors and discussed the advantages of General College and the University

"The advisers and faculty at General College provided her with the tools to be successful and attain her academic goals. Advisers provided just the right amount of support and guidance ... always willing to offer suggestions and help her make decisions. Furthermore, in times of stress the adviser maintained communication to ensure success, demonstrating care and concern. In addition, the excellent teaching at General College enabled Angela to succeed in a university environment. Without General College, Angela's potential for success may have gone unnoticed and unrealized Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You have made a difference!"

Mara Heck is working on an individualized degree program in the College of Liberal Arts.

"I came to a huge university... and General College made it easier. I was amazed how the professors and teaching assistants cared so much. I remember walking down the steps of Appleby Hall and having a professor call me by name. Later on, that professor and two others from GC wrote me recommendations for scholarships This [past] summer I worked as a new student weekend counselor and freshman orientation staff member. After meeting me, I hope that the General College class of 2005 are eager to begin their adventure and are more assured that it will be a good one General College is an amazing program. Please know there are students out there who appreciate everything you do."

Cathrine Wambach

34th GC faculty member to win
Morse–UMAA teaching award for undergraduate education



Cathrine Wambach, associate professor of psychology, is the 34th General College faculty member to win the Horace T. Morse–University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award, established in 1965. (Morse was the first dean of General College, serving from 1940 to 1966.) The Morse award recognizes outstanding contributions to undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota. Wambach and other honorees will join the Academy of Distinguished Teachers for a five-year term. Following is the text from the program of the Distinguished Teaching Awards Ceremony, held April 22 at the McNamara Alumni Center.

“Rather than seeing the classroom as an arena where we demonstrate our expertise, we can see it as a place where students demonstrate theirs. If students don’t have questions, I ask them questions. For learners there is no substitute for challenge, practice, and feedback.”

Cathrine Wambach’s strong belief in and understanding of the General College mission is contagious. She puts into practice what she and others have learned about academically fragile students, blending personal contact with cutting-edge technology. Her approach to teaching is a joint venture between her and the students, and she works hard to create a sense of community in her classes.

“Professor Wambach is one of the most creative and demanding, yet caring and supportive teachers in General College,” says a colleague. “She holds students accountable for quality work at the same time she cares for them as people.” Wambach’s students are equally complimentary. “She challenged my self-defeating thoughts ... and helped me to develop enough confidence to take on the challenge of graduate school,” writes a former student. “She instilled a curiosity in me, a desire to push myself to achieve all that I was capable of, and a love of psychology.”

Wambach’s teaching and research form a seamless whole. She recently led the design of a new certificate program that will be one of only four in the nation. She champions the college’s initiative to expand gender and multicultural perspectives in its curriculum. “She is an all-college person,” says one colleague. “Her work has become a hallmark of what General College is all about: dedication to high quality teaching and learning, care and support for students, and a commitment to better understanding issues related to student learning.”

News notes

More than **\$26,000 in merit scholarships** was awarded to **38 General College students in the TRIO Student Support Services Program** at the end of fall semester. The first TRIO Incentive for Performance Scholarships (TIPS) were awarded based on fall 2001 enrollment and performance in a General College course in a TRIO learning community and/or a General College course with a TRIO Supplemental Instruction course attached. For Pell grant-eligible students (students from the lowest family income backgrounds based upon a federal family financial assessment formula), each A- or A grade earned \$600 and each B- or B or B+ grade earned \$400. The TIP scholarship is funded by a \$32,000

grant from the U.S. Department of Education and a \$16,000 (50 percent) match from the University’s Office of Student Finance.

The **African American Read-In** reports 11,493 individuals participated this year in a Read-In activity. The best year prior to this was some 5,000 participants.

University Day Community and the **Center for Experiential Learning (formerly known as the Experiential Learning Service Center)** have new quarters. They are now located at 2700 Summer St. N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55413. Their phone numbers will remain the same. Vision Quest Upward Bound also moved with them.

National recognition

Jeanne Higbee is the winner of this year’s “Outstanding Contribution to NADE” (National Association for Developmental Education) award. She has also been appointed publications chair of NADE’s Professional Development committee and

to the Standing Committee on Disability for the American College Personnel Association.

Harvey Carlson was elected chair of the National Academic Advising Association’s (NACADA) Advising Students with Disabilities Commission.

University award winners

The University of Minnesota Women’s Center and the Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education gave out their Unsung Heroine Awards to women from around the University March 26. Five of the 23 women honored were from General College: **Lizette Bartholdi, Marlene Parkhurst, Fran Stark, Susan Warfield, and Juni Banerjee-Stevens.**

Rodolfo (Rudy) Hernández has been selected as one of the 25 participants for the 2002–03 President’s Emerging Leaders Program.

Lori Anne Williams and **Annette Digre** participated in the leadership program this year.

Grants

Walter R. Jacobs III, Randy Moore, and Tom Reynolds received 2002 McKnight Faculty Summer Research Fellowships, awarded by the University of Minnesota's Office of the Vice President for Research. Each will receive a \$5,000 grant. (For descriptions of Jacobs' and Reynolds' projects, see page 12.) **Moore** will be working on a scholarly book documenting the history and societal significance of the evolution/creationism controversy.

Diane Wartchow and the **Student Parent HELP Center** received a \$15,000 grant from the McKnight Foundation. This grant, third in a three-year commitment, assists student parents with emergency needs.

Mark Bellcourt and **Ando-giikendaasowin (Seek to Know) Native American Math & Science Camp** (formerly AISES Math & Science Summer Camp) received a \$3,500 grant from the Two Feathers Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation.

Publications

Albrecht, Lisa. "For the Love of Peace: Feminist Peace Organizing in Israel and Palestine," *Kiosk*, the newspaper by and for U of M faculty and staff, Jan.-Feb., 2002, pp. 4-5.

Amram, Fred. His research about women and African American inventors was cited in a January 17 *New York Times* feature article that was reprinted with a different heading in the January 26 *San Francisco Chronicle*. An article about independent inventors in the February 11 *U.S. News & World Report* made extensive use of interviews with Professor Amram.

Bruch, Patrick. "Toward a New Conversation: Multiculturalism for Developmental Education," *NADE Monograph*, 2002.

Buckley, Tom. "Trucks Along the Southwest Border: Army Motorization and Highway Construction in the U.S.-Mexico Border Country, 1916-1926," *Journal of Big Bend Studies*, Vol. 13.

Hatch, Jay and E. E. Elias, "Ovarian cycling, clutch characteristics and oocyte size of the river shiner *Notropis blennioides* (Girard) in the Upper Mississippi River." *Journal of Freshwater Ecology* 17 (1):85-92.

Higbee, Jeanne. "Addressing current events in classroom discussions," *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 18(2), 85-90.

—. "The application of Chickering's theory of student development on student success in the sixties and beyond." *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 18(2), 24-36.

James, Pat. "Ideas in Practice: Fostering Metaphoric Thinking," *Journal of Developmental Education*, spring 2002.

Lee, Amy and Shari Stenberg. "Developing Pedagogies: Learning the Teaching of English," *College English*, January 2002.

Randy Moore. *Evolution in the Courtroom: A Reference Guide*, ABC-CLIO, 2002.

—. "The 'Pretty Redhead' Who Changed Science Education," in the *Journal of College Science Teaching*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2001.

NEWS FROM THE RESEARCH CENTER

Dana Britt Lundell, director; Jeanne L. Higbee, faculty chair

Juni Banerjee-Stevens and Jennifer Kreml, graduate research assistants

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AND URBAN LITERACY (CRDEUL)

www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/

New Reports from CRDEUL

Hennepin County Report on African American Men

The University's contribution to a larger regional collaboration, the Hennepin County African American Men Project (HCAAM) is featured in "African American Men at the University: Who Applies, Who is Accepted, Who Attends?" The report features data gathered by a research subcommittee of General College and CRDEUL staff, focusing on admission and retention rates for African American men at the University of Minnesota, with recommendations for future research and support services.

The full Hennepin County report is available at www.co.hennepin.mn.us/opd/opd.htm. GC's report summarizing relevant University data for HCAAM is available at: www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/publications.htm.

A free public forum was held April 29 to discuss the results and impact of both reports, featuring a panel of GC researchers and Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development Director Gary Cunningham.

Developmental College Students' Negotiation of Literacy Practices Between Peer, Family, Workplace, and University Worlds

The second report summarizes the results of a qualitative, longitudinal study of 14 students' transitions from high school to the General College. Coauthors are Dr. Richard Beach, Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Dana Britt Lundell, CRDEUL; and Dr. Hyang-Jin Jung, Cultural Anthropology. Descriptive categories—including cultural models, developmental college, university, peers, family, and work—were developed to analyze the inter-

views of students conducted during a two-year transition into the University. A public forum featuring these students' perspectives on college transitions was held May 3. The full-length report is available at www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/publications.htm.

More New Publications

"Histories of Developmental Education" and "Proceedings of the Second Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education" are available at www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/publications.htm.

Visiting Scholar Program, May 29–31

Dr. James Banks, professor and director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington-Seattle, will be a featured visiting scholar at the University May 29 and 31. The following free events are sponsored by CRDEUL and are open to the public:

Public lecture and book signing

"Teaching for Unity and Diversity in a Time of National Crisis," Wednesday, May 29, 7:00 p.m., Shepherd Room, Weisman Art Museum. (Cosponsored by Weisman Art Museum.)

Regional panel/roundtable discussion

facilitated by Dr. Banks, featuring regional scholars, "The Quest for Educational Equality in a Time of High-Stakes Testing, Standardization, and Debates over Access and Retention," Friday, May 31, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., University Ballroom, Radisson Hotel Metrodome.



—. "Teaching Evolution: Do State Standards Matter?" *National Center for Science Education Reports*.

Moore, Murray Jensen, and Jay Hatch had the following three articles published earlier this year in *The American Biology Teacher*:

"Cooperative learning—Part I: Cooperative quizzes." 64 (1):29-34.

"Cooperative Learning—Part II. Cooperative group activities for the first week of class: Setting the tone with group web pages." 64(2):118-120.

"Our apartheid," 64 (2):87-88, 90-91.

Taylor, David V. with Paul Larsen. *Cap Wigington: An Architectural Legacy in Ice and Stone*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002.

Welcome to new staff member

Nanda Warren, program associate, Dugsi Program

Promotions

Jennifer Peterson, accountant, Financial Services

Position change

Betsy Taplin, development assistant, Development Office

Best wishes to departed staff

Marjorie Cowmeadow, Dean's Office (retired)

Peter DeLong, Day Community

Jason Miller, Academic Affairs

Obituaries

Paul S. Hagen, 82, associate professor of speech communication in General College, died on November 20, 2001, in Englewood, Florida. He was a faculty member in General College from 1959 until his retirement in 1982. He also taught part-time in the Rhetoric Department from 1946 to 1952 and in the Speech Department from 1955 to 1959. Hagen was a gifted teacher who had a unique rapport with students.

Louis T. Safer, 88, professor and head of the General Arts division of General College for more than 30 years, died January 14, 2002, at his home in St. Paul. Safer was also an accomplished visual artist whose work has been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in the Smithsonian Institution, the Walker Art Center, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, among many other venues. Colleagues described him as a "gentle and talented artist with a sometimes irreverent view of academic life."

Nina Draxten, 98, assistant professor of English in General College, died February 14, 2002, in Minneapolis. Draxten was a high school teacher for 20 years before coming to the University as an instructor in 1945. She retired as an assistant professor in 1969. Post-retirement, she wrote two books and embarked on an acting career at age 81. Draxten was also noted for her research and publications on the Norwegian-American community in Minnesota.

Foster to represent GC on UMAA national board

General College is pleased to announce the appointment of Barbara Rose Stephens Foster as General College's representative on the University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA) National Board. Foster is an alumna of the college (AA, '86, BGS, '90) and spent 34 years working in General College; when she retired in July 1999 she was senior administrative director.

The Stephens family has a long history of dedication to the University and to General College. Barbara's older brother, the late Sanford (Sandy) Stephens, is well known to University alumni as quarterback of the 1961 Golden Gopher national football championships, most valuable player of the University's victory at the 1962 Rose Bowl, and the first black All-American quarterback. Foster's sister, Dr. Joyce A. (Stephens) Bell, started her academic journey in General College and credits her success to the teachers and advisers who guided her. Foster's younger brother, Raymond, as well as her children, Lee and Sharla, are all General College alumni.

The General College is in the process of reconstituting its collegiate alumni society. More than 500 General College alumni belong to the UMAA. We plan to host alumni focus groups over the next year to find out what GC alumni would like from their alumni society. Your input is welcome. Questions or comments? Please call Kirsten Johnson, director of development and alumni relations, at 612-625-8398.



Bill Lahr and Karen Sternal have made more than 200 “dreams come true” since 1991. That’s the year the Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship program began to award financial support to high school students who were the first in their family to attend college.

Lahr and Sternal wanted to provide financial support for low-income Minneapolis public high school students to attend college. They had been inspired by the Dream Scholarship program, established by Eugene Lang in Harlem in 1981, which matched grade school children with mentors and promised them a college scholarship if they graduated from high school.

Inquiries eventually led them to the University’s Upward Bound program, housed in General College. Established nationally in 1967, Upward Bound prepares low-income, first-generation high school students for successful matriculation to higher education.

Bruce Schelske, former director of Upward Bound and now director of TRIO Student Support Services (both of which are joint programs of General College and the U.S. Department of Education), said, “We were delighted with their proposal. Traditionally, students in the Upward Bound program are at greater risk for not completing high school and going to college.” Schelske explained that critical barriers to Upward Bound students’ success in higher education stem from lack of financial resources coupled with the lack of parental education.

The Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship program was originally quite small. Over the years, Lahr and Sternal found the need for support so vast and the student stories so compelling that the scholarship has evolved into a greater financial commitment. The latest stage in the scholarship’s evolution escrows scholarship money based on each year of successful completion by the Upward Bound participants. “The Dream Scholarship is a contract with the students. If students don’t live up to their commitments, they lose the scholarship,” Lahr said. “Karen and I know that the students and their families respond to it.”

The University’s Upward Bound program concentrates its work in three Minneapolis public high schools: North, South, and Edison. Many of the scholarship recipients come from underserved communities, such as urban African Americans and immigrant and refugee communities from sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast and South Asia.

In appreciation of the generous support provided by Lahr and Sternal, Upward Bound’s program director, Aloida Zaragoza, hosts an annual Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship ceremony in which Upward Bound alumni and current students have an opportunity to celebrate their achievements. “Student interaction with Bill and Karen at the ceremony allows for the tangible understanding that it is our collective responsibility to give back to others to make this world a better place,” Zaragoza said.

Sternal and Lahr’s vision and ongoing financial commitment to Upward Bound students has been an important factor in the college success stories of many Upward Bound graduates. “The Dream Scholarship program is an important retention

tool that Upward Bound uses to encourage students and families to finish all four years of the program,” Zaragoza said. Lahr

also regards the TRIO/Upward Bound staff as “an indispensable ingredient to success,” adding, “we hope that others will join us in giving to this very effective program and start similar programs elsewhere.” —*Betsy Taplin*

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Photo by Diana Watters



Benefactors of the Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship program, Bill Lahr and Karen Sternal, are owners of Midwest Auto Parts, parent company of Bumper-to-Bumper Auto Parts, among others.

Access and Excellence CAMPAIGN REPORT

Director of Development and Alumni Relations
Kirsten Johnson

Scholarships are our primary fundraising objective

With fifteen months remaining in Campaign Minnesota, the University of Minnesota has identified scholarship funding as its primary fundraising objective through the close of the campaign. This is in keeping with the student-centered focus maintained by President Yudof throughout his presidency. Similarly, General College has identified the need for support for its students as a central objective in its campaign effort, *Access and Excellence*.

With University tuition reaching \$5,400 annually, General College seeks to make scholarships available to students with a broad range of needs, encompassing more than academic performance alone. While GC students are expected to perform in the University environment carrying a full credit load and satisfactorily meeting academic standards, we believe scholarship funding should be available to our students to address specific financial needs that might prove insurmountable and keep them from completing their education. We do this through

partnerships with alumni and friends who support the college through scholarship gifts.

Examples of support can be found in the Estes Family Scholarship which provides low-income minority students with scholarship funds; the Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship program that provides incentive scholarships to students who, as first-generation, low-income students, complete the Upward Bound program and matriculate to the University (see article on page 19); or the Binger Scholarship program which assists student parents with the financial challenges they face raising their children while working and going to school.

I invite you to join in supporting the General College scholarship program and GC students. Everyone can make a difference when it comes to helping students. Your gift, no matter how big or small, is a vital contribution and for a limited time will be matched by the Hubbard Family Challenge. Please call me at 612-625-8398 if you have questions about how your gift may best benefit a GC student.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The University of Minnesota Alumni Association's annual celebration will be held on June 4, 2002, from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the McNamara Alumni Center. This year promises to be one of the best celebrations yet. The meeting and celebration will officially open the new Gateway Plaza. Come celebrate with General College! Look for more information from us in the next month or so. For more information, please contact Kirsten Johnson, director of development and alumni relations, at 612-625-8398.