

THE GENERAL COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Access

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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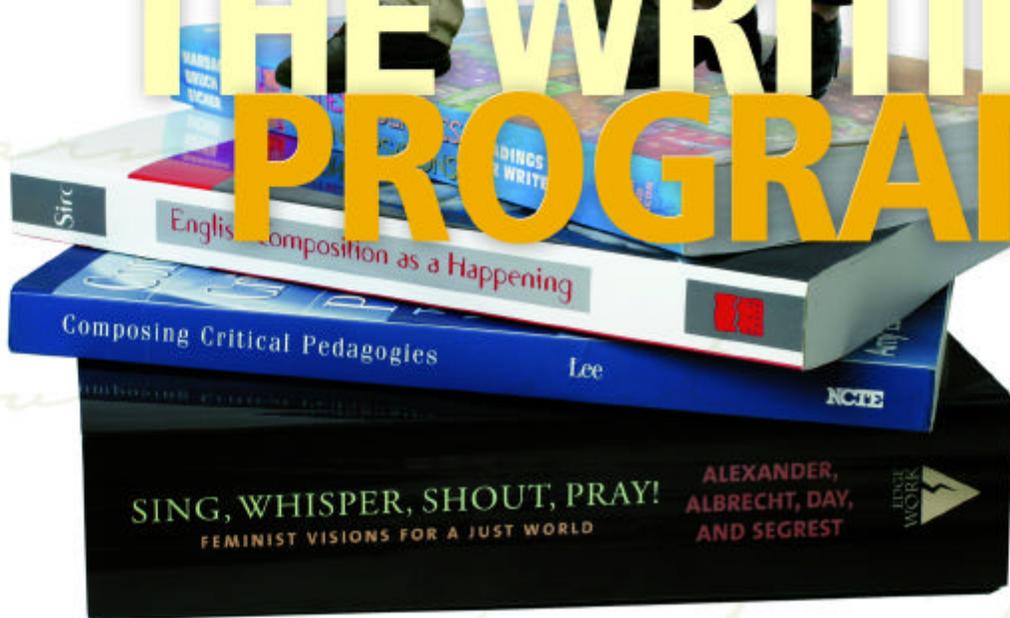
Volume 2, Number 3

SPRING 2003



Building a Foundation

THE WRITING PROGRAM



INSIDE:

**Geek Squad-
GC connection
revealed**



From the Source

Dean David V. Taylor

FOCUS ON

The Writing Program

Occasionally, we like to feature a program within the General College that has garnered national attention for excellence. In this issue of *Access* we have spotlighted our writing program. Did you know that there is a significant correlation between a person's vocabulary and ability to write effectively and their income-earning potential? Writing, like math and science, is a foundation skill fundamental to one's ability to compete effectively in today's labor market.

Writing has always been an important part of my educational background. At the age of twelve I was an editor and publisher of a newspaper called the "Weekly Trumpet." As a teenager I was also a reporter for several other journalistic enterprises. In high school we were routinely required to write history research papers of 10–12 pages. In the 1960s, well before writing across the curriculum became trendy at the University of Minnesota, it seems that we were forever writing papers as undergraduates. My senior thesis paper in history was at least 50 pages (20 pages longer than it needed to be). In spite of such rich preparation for a career as a

historian, I could have benefited from a supportive writing curriculum such as the one General College provides for its students.

One of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education is the ability to communicate. Even the brightest students must find acceptable ways in which to communicate with the rest of the world. The liberal studies curriculum of the General College provides that opportunity through courses in speech communication as well as English composition. Empowering students to think critically and to express themselves competently is liberating for both teacher and student. Every student enrolled in the General College must take two composition courses unless exempted by examination. They may not all become a Norman Mailer or Maya Angelou as a result of the experience. They will, however, know the fundamentals of effective writing.

ON THE COVER

Amy Lee and Pat Bruch, along with Tom Reynolds (not pictured), direct General College's writing program, a key component of the college's developmental education mission. The books on which they stand were written, cowritten, or edited by GC writing faculty. *Photos by Scott Cohen.*

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Christine Sleeter

By Lisa Albrecht

General College hosted two days of presentations by nationally known multicultural scholar-educator Christine Sleeter on March 6 and 7. Sleeter is professor of education and professional studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, and director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Education.

Nearly 100 people attended Sleeter's keynote address at Coffman Union on the evening of March 6. Titled "What's a White Girl Like You Doing in Multicultural Education?", Sleeter's talk described an anti-racist, multicultural education that revolves around three key issues: (1) Multicultural education is excellent education and access for all students; (2) Multicultural education is about equality and preparing the next generation to create a better society; and (3) Multicultural education is about talking across lines of difference.

The following morning, March 7, Sleeter led a workshop attended by some 40 faculty and staff, "Dismantling White Privilege in Higher Education." That afternoon she facilitated "The Meanings of Diversity: A Student Conversation," a workshop attended by more than 50 students from all over the University, who engaged in a spirited dialogue about their own experiences with and opinions on multicultural education.

Sleeter has won awards for her work from the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the National Association for Multicultural Education. Her articles have appeared in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Multicultural Education*, *Educational Researcher*, *Harvard Educational Review*, and many other journals. She is the

author or editor of 11 books, including *Multicultural Education as Social Activism* (SUNY Press) and *Doing Multicultural Education for Achievement and Equity* (forthcoming, Wiley).

Sleeter's visit was sponsored by General College with support from the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office for Multicultural and Academic Affairs, Office for University Women, Minnesota Reads: A Higher Education Partnership to Better Prepare Literacy Teachers (a project of the Curriculum and Instruction Department and the College of Education and Human Development), and the Coca Cola Partnership with the University of Minnesota.



Christine Sleeter (left) discusses the meanings of diversity at a workshop for students.

General College faculty and staff prepared for Dr. Sleeter's visit by reading some of her writings, including the following:

— "Diversity vs. White Privilege," *Rethinking Schools Online*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Winter 2000/01. Available online at: www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/15_02/Int152.shtml.

— "White Racism," *Multicultural Education*, Spring 1994, 5-9.

— "Introduction: Multicultural Education and Empowerment" and "Mapping Terrains of Power: Student Cultural Knowledge Versus Classroom Knowledge," with Carl Grant, in *Empowerment Through Multicultural Education*, C. Sleeter, Ed., SUNY Press, 1991, 1-23, 49-67, plus bibliography.



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Access received a 2003 **Maroon Award for Communications Excellence** in the magazine category from the University of Minnesota Communicators Forum.

Frequent contributor **Scott Cohen** received four awards in the recent Minnesota News Photographers Association contest.

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Access is published by the University of Minnesota's General College for alumni/ae, faculty, staff, and friends of the college.

The mission of General College is to provide access to the University of Minnesota for highly motivated students from a broad range of backgrounds who demonstrate potential to succeed at a major research university and to advance research in fields affecting those students' success, including developmental and multicultural education.

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By Allen Johnson

The General College recently received word that Professor Cornelia Taylor Williams McCune passed away on October 15, 2002, in Roseville, Minnesota. She was arguably the most significant force in building the research and counseling unit during the first 23 years of General College's life.

Cornelia Taylor was born in St. Paul on Christmas Day 1907. She completed the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees—all in a space of eight years—in psychology with a minor in child welfare at the University of Minnesota. Her program advisers said that Cornelia, affectionately known as “Queeno,” was one of the most competent and brilliant students who had ever done undergraduate and graduate work in their disciplines. Upon completion of the Ph.D. in 1933, she taught psychology at the University of Rochester in New York.

Cornelia “Queeno” McCUNE

She returned to the University of Minnesota in 1936 and accepted a position as instructor and research counselor in the then four-year-old General College. Director Malcolm MacLean put McCune in charge as the first director of the General College counseling service. MacLean, recognizing her remarkable energy, judgment, and intellect along with her overwhelming passion for research and counseling, gave her a formidable task. He asked her to take the results from the extensive GC study of adolescence and apply those outcomes directly into the research, counseling, and teaching aspects of curriculum revision. Furthermore, he asked her to devise ways in which a complete profile of students in a specific class could be given to the instructor early in the term so that that instructor could adapt his or her teaching methods to that class. Finally, MacLean asked her to extract and combine the results of the adolescence and adult studies and use them to improve the counseling program.

McCune was equal to the challenge. The goal of the founders of General College, as well as those on the staff in the 1930s, was to learn all they could about the type of

student that GC was designed to serve. She coordinated the research and consolidated the results to accomplish the stated goal. The results were described in a series of research publications. One of the most significant studies that McCune authored was entitled *These We Teach*, detailing the findings of the adolescence study, which included 1,300 surveys and 200 student interviews.

By the early 1940s, McCune had demonstrated considerable effectiveness as a researcher and counselor and was extolled by prestigious researchers and educators of the time. Professor and research evaluator Ruth Eckert noted that in addition to her superior mental ability, McCune was a popular, sympathetic, and realistic counselor. Horace T. Morse, then assistant director of General College, was impressed by her ability to draw students out and break down any barriers they might have to sharing their problems.

The passing of a significant force in the founding of the General College counseling unit



Cornelia “Queeno” McCune, about 1961. Photo courtesy University Archives.

They accepted her as a friend, Morse wrote, rather than someone trying to pry into their personal affairs. He also said that McCune had much charm and poise, as well as deep insight into the motives behind student behavior. Professor T. R. McConnell, associate dean of the College of Science, Literature, and the Arts (later CLA), called McCune one of the ablest

young people on campus in the field of personnel work and urged that she be kept on the central staff to provide continuity and leadership.

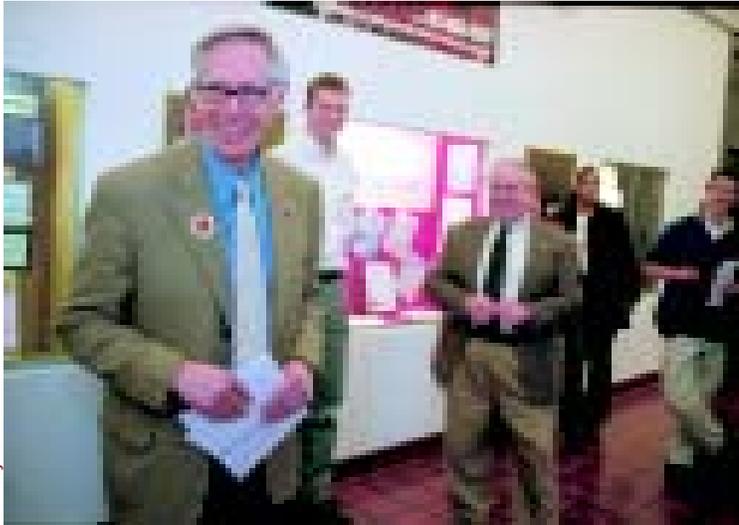
McCune's value and ability were also recognized by other groups. She took a leave of absence during 1943-46 to serve with the U. S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve in Washington, D. C. As the ranking female officer in the Marines, with a rank of major, she was directly involved in the founding of the Women's Reserve. During those three years she served as the officer in charge of personnel classification, where she

GC NEWS NOTES

Dean Taylor receives Gandhi, King, Ikeda award

Dean David Taylor was awarded the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders prize in February, presented by Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, the alma mater of Dr. Martin Luther King. The prize was given in conjunction with the international exhibition on nonviolence, "Gandhi, King, Ikeda: A Legacy of Building Peace," that was shown at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

The award was created to celebrate the lives and work of three men from three different cultures and countries whose common path of profound dedication to peace has been recognized internationally. Dean Taylor received the award for his "outstanding leadership of General College and its commitment to nonviolence and peace," and for his "extraordinary efforts to promote educational opportunities for all Minnesotans," in the words of Lawrence Edward Carter, Sr., dean and professor of religion at Morehouse.



Jayme Halbritter

A beautiful ('U') day in the neighborhood

Appleby Hall was on the itinerary of University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks on Beautiful "U" Day, April 22. The president and staff members of Facilities Management were on hand to honor General College and Appleby Hall custodial staff's collaboration in the Beautiful Classrooms initiative. Components of the initiative include increased attention to recycling and having staff empty their own trash each day to free up the custodians to attend to other building maintenance tasks.



Scott Cohen

Folk singer debuts song at Student Parent HELP Center

Nationally known folk singer and recording artist Larry Long debuted his song "I Do You," written in memory of Virginia McKnight Binger, longtime supporter and friend of the Student Parent HELP Center, in March at Appleby Hall. Long visited the HELP Center's Parent Education Group with Binger's granddaughter Noa Saryk. Long's lyrics were based on real-life stories of how Binger's generosity had affected the lives of HELP Center student parents and other recipients of Virginia McKnight Binger scholarships. Saryk, chair of the McKnight Foundation, was moved to tears by the touching tribute to her grandmother's kindness and love for people.

The Student Parent HELP Center will be featured on "Saint Anthony Falls Journal," cable access channel 6, at 6 p.m. on Thursdays, for six months, beginning this summer. Watch for it!

This year marks the fourth edition of the newsletter *Community Connections*, a collaboration between General College and the Career and Community Learning Center (CCLC) in the College of Liberal Arts. GC students enrolled in the Community Service Writing course generate story ideas, do background research and interviews, write news stories, take photos, and edit the newsletter, which provides a look at the role of community service and service learning on the University of Minnesota campus.

CCLC's Kristin Dawson, who has worked with the newsletter course for the past three years, stated, "Without the hard work and dedication of the instructor, Christine Howell, and her students, CCLC would not have the staff or fiscal resources to produce a newsletter of this caliber. Christine inspires our staff and the students for this challenging project. Combining intensive reflective activity with work in the community is a level of dedication to service learning that sets the standard for other service learning students."

The newsletter is available online at www.gen.umn.edu/courses/1423/Default.htm. For a print copy, contact Howell at howel015@umn.edu, or at the General College mailing address.

FOCUS

on GC's writing

ENGAGING STUDENTS AS WRITERS

By Tom Lonergan

Photos by Scott Cohen

Picture the lone student facing a writing assignment—tired, short of ideas and time—frustratedly watching the clock tick toward a class deadline.

University students find themselves in such a predicament from time to time, but it's not a scene the General College writing program would promote. In fact, the post-midnight frustration scenario is the exact opposite of the creative, helpful, and participatory learning atmosphere GC writing faculty and students attempt to generate together.

Amy Lee



The writing program is a vital component of a developmental education approach to prepare students to learn, understand, and succeed as they move ahead at the University and in life. “We’re engaging students as whole writers and thinkers,” said associate professor Amy Lee, co-director of the GC writing program with assistant professors Pat Bruch and Tom Reynolds.

The writing program has advanced General College’s mission as a national leader in developmental education research. Through innovative teaching approaches, nationally and internationally circulated research on writing, and a long-standing relationship with diverse communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the GC writing program has built a solid and recognized foundation in its discipline.

“GC has been a forum for thoughtful pedagogical innovation for the entire field of composition,” said Tom Fox, professor of composition at California State-Chico. “GC has some of the best, most informed teachers and researchers in the field.”

There are very few tenured and tenure-track professors at highly regarded schools who teach basic writing, Bruch said. “Some of the people who do the scholarly research don’t even regularly teach the class,” he said.

Teachers in GC’s program—Lee, Bruch, Reynolds, Professor Geoff Sirc, Associate Professor Lisa Albrecht, nine full-time teaching specialists, and four graduate assistants—are encouraged to adopt “boundaries but not a set script,” Bruch said. “A responsive, participatory approach is uniform through the program.”

Developing confidence and competence

The program’s writing lab workshop setting, Lee said, is to help students “develop confidence and competence as writers” and to promote writing both as a disciplined craft to learn and as part of a literacy that is not divorced from individual experience or societal influences.

Two semesters of writing courses are required of all GC students. The initial course (GC 1421) focuses on the basics, introducing students to writing as a disciplined activity, requiring action, reflection, and critique. Encouraging students to express their experience in writing is at the heart of the first-semester course.

The second semester of the writing program (GC 1422, 1423, or 1424) builds on the narrative, analytical, and argumentation skills students developed in the first course. The courses continue to emphasize the importance of research and using sources, prepare students for longer writing projects, and offer some directional options, like applying writing to community service work (see page 5) or communicating in a diverse society.

Much of the first course is about learning to write papers in the range of four to five pages, Reynolds said. Writing strategies, including the circulation of ideas, peer and instructor response to paper drafts, and the discussion of writing

Tom Reynolds



itself as an important social activity form the core of the course, he said.

“They’re learning academic culture and what it takes to develop, research, and write a four-page paper that’s meaningful,” said Reynolds. Many students, he added, have had “very little experience writing an argument. We draw them in through topics that matter to them,” Reynolds said.

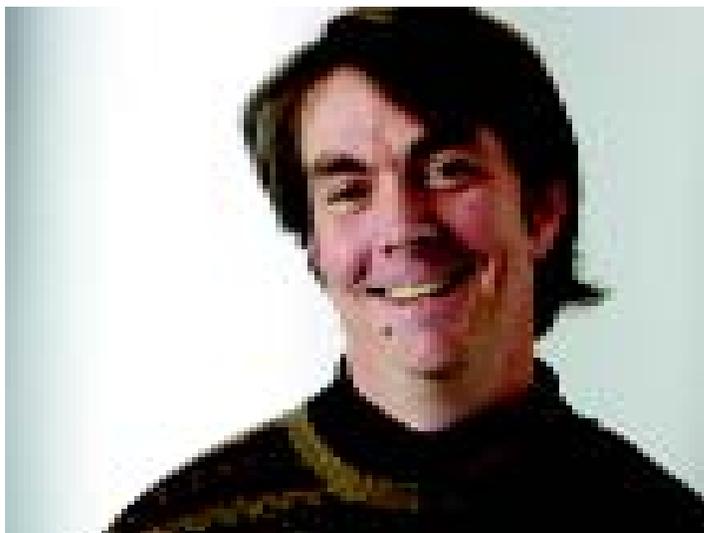
The program promotes student experiences and welcomes their writing as a contribution to the learning process rather than demanding a series of formal exercises subject to correction. “We’re not suspending the rules,” Bruch said. “We’re emphasizing that the investment in saying something is

as important as the mechanics of writing.”

Students “treated like writers”

While “an acquaintance with academic writing” is important, Lee said, GC’s writing teachers use a variety of processes and strategies, including journals, commentary, and tasks not unlike what a fiction writer goes through. “The approach is based more on writing with an audience in mind, rather than a task to complete,” she said. “Many of the students become excited to be treated as a writer.”

Include Eddie Vang, 19, in that group. Currently in his second semester, Vang credits the program with helping him realize “you can do a lot of things with writing. I can learn from the professors, myself, and my classmates,” he said. “I enjoy writing now and I enjoy other people’s writing.” When he started at GC last fall, Vang was considering social work. Now, he’d like to pursue teaching English. “I didn’t know I was a writer,”



Pat Bruch

he said. “As I progressed, I wanted to write more.”

It’s that awakening and excitement in students that Bruch, Lee, Reynolds, and the rest of the writing staff teach for.

Reynolds is homegrown, with a doctorate in English from the University of Minnesota. Bruch has a Ph.D. in English composition from Wayne State University in Detroit, and Lee’s Ph.D. in composition studies and critical pedagogy was conferred by the University of Massachusetts. All three have been important influences on the writing program since joining the writing faculty in 1999, with Sirc and Albrecht, who have continued to contribute significantly to the program they have helped to build for decades. (See sidebar on the writing staff’s recent awards and publications.)

GC’s writing program “has always been very strong and a faculty priority,” Lee said. “We believe that writing makes a person a more active participant in society. When students realize they can express themselves through writing, they take a higher level of confidence with them.”

“What’s most important to understand about our program,” said Bruch, “is that the community of teachers reflects our understanding of the classroom community. The program’s accomplishments and outcomes far exceed the simple sum total of individual contributions.”

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS—GC WRITING PROGRAM

Geoffrey Sirc, professor

English Composition as a Happening (Utah State University Press, 2002).
Winner of the W. Ross Winterowd Award for Most Outstanding Book in Composition Theory, Association of Teachers of Advanced Composition, 2003.

Lisa Albrecht, associate professor

Josie Johnson Award for Social Justice and Human Rights, University of Minnesota, 2001.
Coeditor of the anthology, *Sing, Whisper, Shout, Pray!: Feminist Visions for a Just World* (Edgework Books, 2003).

Amy Lee, associate professor

Engaging Writing (Longman, forthcoming, 2004).
“Learning the Teaching of English,” *College English*, 2002.
Composing Critical Pedagogies: Teaching Writing as Revision (National Council of Teachers of English, Refiguring English Studies Series, 2001).

Patrick Bruch, assistant professor

“Moving to the City: Redefining Literacy in the Post-Civil Rights Era,” in B. McComiskey, et. al., editors, *CityComp: Identities, Spaces, Practices* (State University of New York Press, 2003).
Coauthor with R. Marback, “Reflections on Multiculturalism in Developmental Education,” *College Composition and Communication*, 33 (1), 2002.

Bruch and Thomas Reynolds, assistant professor, “Curriculum and Affect: A Participatory Developmental Writing Approach,” *Journal of Developmental Education*, 26 (2), 2002.

Mark Anderson, teaching specialist

Jesus Sound Explosion (University of Georgia Press, forthcoming fall 2003).
Winner of 2003 American Writing Program, best creative nonfiction memoir manuscript.

Teaching specialists **Anderson, Maureen Aitken**, and **Gary Peters** were selected to participate in this year’s Loft Literary Center’s Mentor Series, working with a writing mentor, leading workshops, and holding readings.

The GC Writing Center

By Debra Hartley

Question: Where on the University of Minnesota campus are you likely to see, sitting in the same room, undergraduates raised in Somalia, Nigeria, Iran, Sudan, Manitoba, Kansas, and Minnesota?

Answer: The General College Writing Center, which is part of the Academic Resource Center, 11 Appleby Hall, and a place in which student writers and undergraduate writing consultants learn from each other and replicate the diversity of the entire GC community.



Undergraduate writing consultant Joseph Rein and GC student Gada Beshir.

The Writing Center's mission statement reflects the fact that undergraduate writing consultants do most of the tutoring: "Our mission is to work collaboratively with students to build skills and confidence to improve their writing. Peer consultants facilitate the writing process by listening to writers, helping them clarify and articulate their ideas, and affirming the experiences and abilities students bring to writing."

Begun in the 1970s, the Writing Center includes a staff of about 14 consultants. From September through early April of this academic year, the Writing Center had 3,050 consultations.

Students have learned that they can benefit greatly from working with the writing consultants. Testimonials from former and current GC students bear this out:

Before I started coming to the Writing Center, I didn't know anything about writing. I'd never written a paper, and I didn't know how to organize what I wanted to say or how to express my thoughts. The Writing Center helped me learn how to make

my writing clear and strong, and now I can write a lot better on my own. I don't know if I would know how to write if it hadn't been for the Writing Center.

Dehab, junior, Human Resources major

It's nice to be able to come to the Writing Center because I know the tutors are here to help me. Sometimes your professor will be rushed or unavailable, but you know that the tutors in the Writing Center will take the time to listen to your paper and help you come up with ideas about how to improve it.

Osob, freshman, General College

Writing consultants feel a great sense of accomplishment when they witness growth in students' writing abilities and self-confidence, as illustrated in this story from Renata Fitzpatrick, a GC instructor with a master's degree in English as a second language who tutors in the Writing Center:

In early September about six years ago, a GC freshman came into the Writing Center with the first draft of his first paper, saying

grimly, "I need help." There were three handwritten pages. Chan Lam declined to read them aloud because he was afraid I would not understand his pronunciation. In silence, I read the entire draft, which had no paragraph breaks, very few periods, a multi-

tude of verb errors, and quite a number of utterly unrecognizable words. "You are an amazingly good writer," I told him. Chan laughed heartily at this, but I wasn't joking. His narrative description of fleeing Vietnam in a small boat and surviving an attack by pirates, followed by several years in a refugee camp, was so powerfully told in that draft that I can still remember it today. We talked about the details of the story for a while, and as a result the "non-words" I'd underlined in the draft turned out to be recognizable. We discussed where paragraph breaks might go, and grinning, he said, "Oh, with that I can fix up grammar one part at a time—so it seems not so terrible!" He came back the following day with typed paragraphs and we started to look at the verb errors

For Chan, this was the beginning of another kind of journey against the odds. He stopped by the Writing Center often that first year, occasionally during his sophomore year, and hardly ever after that. As a senior, he brought in a 15-page history paper. "I just need to know if the ideas in these parts are clear," he explained; "I think the rest of the paper is OK."

About a month ago, Chan asked me if I could double-check a short piece of writing. "I checked it already but it's an application for promotion at my work and it has to be perfect." From referring to his own writing with words like "help" and "terrible" as a freshman, Chan Lam moved on eventually to "OK" and is now acknowledging the possibility of near perfection in a piece of his own writing. I hold that thought as another anxious freshman approaches me in the Writing Center, saying, "I need help with my paper."

Writing consultants' lives are enriched through contact with the students they tutor, as witnessed by Brigitte Mussack, undergraduate writing consultant:

Early this year I went over a personal paper with a student, one of the many papers that have deeply touched me and caused me

to rethink how I look at life. The paper gave a personal account of how as a young child this student had lived in a refugee camp in horrendous conditions, and how more than anything the child had wanted an education. I came to realize the immense resiliency that humans possess. When pushed to extreme limits, we can often live through what we may never have thought possible. Put simply, people are amazingly strong. I am fortunate to be able to work with people like this every day.

William Tap, a former GC student originally from Sudan, has been an undergraduate writing consultant for four years and was recently admitted into the master's program for math education, with the goal of becoming a high school math teacher. He highlights the value of learning from students about their cultures:

As a result of diversity in where they come from, GC students bring in as much as they take away from the Writing Center. They come to take away formal academic writing while offering their rich cultures and ideas and diverse styles of writing. I do not have to take a trip of thousands of miles or pay to learn about various cultures because they can be learned free of charge here in General College.

WRITING CENTER, continued on next page



Debra Hartley, left, is the Writing Center coordinator. Renata Fitzpatrick, right, teaches writing in General College and tutors in the Writing Center.

Kia Marie Cook, a former GC student from Milwaukee and writing consultant for two years, has learned that anyone can benefit from using the GC Writing Center:

The General College Writing Center: a resource for bad writers. At least that's what I thought when I was a GC freshman. I knew that writing was one of my strong points, so whenever professors made a "plug" for the Writing Center, I immediately tuned out. Two years later, my attitude changed—I became a writing consultant. Through my experience as a consultant, I realize that the writing center is a great resource for all writers at all stages. Every day I read papers written by outstanding writers who use the Writing Center as reinforcement. I watch them improve with each paper. Now I realize, if only I had visited the Writing Center, I would have realized that a writer's skill is based not only on talent but also on the ability to recognize the need for support.



Brigitte Mussack, William Tapp, and Kia Marie Cook are undergraduate writing consultants.

The General College Writing Center is a valuable and important place for University of Minnesota students to go to become better writers and to learn about each other's lives and cultures.

Debra Hartley is the coordinator of the Writing Center.

McCune, from page 4

recommended women personnel for special services in the Corps.

After her return to the General College following World War II, McCune resumed her leadership in the Counseling Division. It was a different college from the one she had left three years earlier. Returning veterans on the GI Bill caused enrollments to explode and brought new challenges to the counseling function as they had quite different problems and needs than did the non-veteran students. She also discovered that the college had added a number of vocational courses to the regular curriculum. She subsequently published research reports on the counseling needs of veterans and the supportive relationships between general education and vocational preparation. Also during this time, McCune was rewarded for her service to student life, receiving the All-University Congress Staff Award in 1953.

In 1955, Cornelia married George McCune, a social studies professor in the General College. George McCune, also a creative and energetic person, had one of the most active minds that ever graced the faculty of GC, said some of his peers.

However, the existence of a nepotism rule at the University, whereby relatives could not be employed in the same organization, forced Cornelia give up her position. Ironically, she was the last individual in the University to be affected by the rule. Several units, including the Student Counseling Bureau and the Office of the Dean of Students sought her wisdom and expertise. She continued to serve the University in the areas of her expertise until retirement in the early 1970s. Cornelia and George traveled and camped extensively and trained and showed their prize-winning Cairn terriers. They shared their many hobbies and professional interests until George's death in 1988.

In recent years, GC has won University honors as one of the best places to work for both civil service and bargaining unit (CSBU) staff and professional and administrative (P&A) employees. Here are profiles of both employee groups.

Civil Service

The GC Civil Service Committee is the driving force in creating opportunities for professional development, training, and orientation for GC civil service and bargaining unit (CSBU) staff. Their efforts are a key reason why General College has twice been named as one of the “Top Ten University Departments” for CSBU staff to work for—in 2000 and 2001.

The 2002-03 academic year GC Civil Service Committee—Barry Stehlik (chair), Jennifer Laueremann, Jennifer Peterson, Pat Hara, and Fran Stark—represent over 55 years of University service. All five were elected by the General College Civil Service Association (all CSBU staff) last spring.

The committee facilitates in-college workshops for CSBU staff, including planning and hosting the annual Civil Service Retreat. This event is typically held during the spring; the entire Civil Service Association is encouraged to attend. Topics at the annual retreat have included professional development, investment and retirement options, health and wellness, conflict resolution, and workplace communication. This year’s April retreat featured sessions on networking at the University as well as conflict resolution and personal safety.

The Civil Service Committee also coordinates the Outstanding Civil Service Performance Award program. The goal of this program is to promote and affirm the value of CSBU employees by recognizing their outstanding achievements and service to General College faculty, staff, and students. Awards are given each semester in the areas of service delivery/professionalism, cost reduction/operation improvement, and quality/quantity of a job outcome.

Finally, through varied activities including mentoring new staff, coordinating monthly lunch gatherings, holding semiannual Civil Service Association meetings, and revitalizing the Barbara Stephens Foster Civil Service Staff Lounge, the Civil Service Committee reinforces the sense of community among all GC CSBU staff.

The GC Civil Service Association and its governing committee are a necessary and important part of the General College. Their work creating and recognizing outstanding employees and fostering a sense of community pride is an essential part of what makes the General College such a great place to work.

—Barry Stehlik and Jennifer Laueremann

General College
is more than a
great place to
learn. Faculty
and staff alike will
tell you that **General**
College is a great
place to *work.*

Professional and Administrative

Professional and Administrative (P&A) staff fulfill a wide range of job duties at the University. P&A is the largest employee group in General College, comprising teaching specialists and academic advisers. In GC, other “P&A” designations include the directors of the McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, Commanding English, Student Support Services, African American Read-In, and Ando-Giikendaasowin Native American Math and Science Summer Camp programs.

General College has a history of participation from its students and staff, and its P&A employees are no different. GC’s P&A staff organized the General College Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (GC-CAPA) three years ago, one of the first

colleges to have such an organized group. In fall 2003 the group was recognized by the college’s governing assembly as a permanent committee.

By joining together, the staff is able to plan professional development opportunities, review evaluation and other procedures, and help to make General College a more efficient operation.

According to Rae Rusnak, GC-CAPA chair and a teaching specialist in math and sciences, the steering committee for GC-CAPA has been working to ensure a quality work environment and fair treatment across the wide range of duties among P&As in the college.

Some of the issues the group has tackled include looking at how teaching specialists and counselor advocates (academic advisers) are reviewed for promotion. Both follow a process similar to faculty tenure and promotion, in which service to students, the college, the University, and the profession are reviewed. “This is a very thorough and fair process,” noted Mary Ellen Shaw, an adviser who was promoted from associate counselor advocate to counselor advocate last year as a result of such a review.

Even with tricky issues such as promotion to deal with, GC P&As know this is a wonderful place to work. That’s why they nominated General College to win the Unit Award, the University’s Council of Academic Professional and Administrators’ (CAPA) recognition of a college or department with a strong history of valuing the work of P&As.

“From David Taylor on down, there is a supportive environment for P&A employees to thrive,” said one P&A employee. “The culture at General College is that we encourage each other to do excellent work on behalf of our students.”

Whether they are writing grants, teaching biology, running the Academic Resource Center, or administering the college, General College P&A staff, along with their colleagues on the faculty and in civil service positions, know that they are lucky to be working in a challenging and rewarding environment.

—Lori-Anne Williams and Christen Christopherson

News notes

General College's **Upward Bound** program has been funded by the federal government for the next five years—\$2.5 million dollars. GC's Upward Bound program was in the top 10 percent of grants reviewed.

The African American Read-In recorded almost 12,400 participants this year, and donated over 4,000 books to Twin Cities' schools and community groups. St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly proclaimed February 2–3 "African American Read-In Days." GC-supported Read-In activities were held at almost 100 locations in 7 cities in Minnesota. Two GC-supported Read-In programs were held in Wilmington, Delaware, and over 200 books were donated. In Duluth, the Read-In worked with Lake Superior College, where 47 volunteers read at 16 elementary schools and over 750 books were donated.

National recognition

Geoff Sirc won the Ross Winterowd Award for the most outstanding book published last year in composition theory at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in New York City.

Randy Moore was elected to a three-year term on the board of directors of the Society for College Science Teaching.

Jill Barnum (Gidmark) was first vice chair of the College English Association for 2002–03 and served as program chair for the association's 34th annual international conference in April in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Aloida Zaragoza received the 2002 President's Award from the Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel for distinguished service to the organization.

University and community recognition

Rick Uthe has been awarded an honorary lifetime membership by the board of directors of the Geological Society of Minnesota for his 25 years of contributions to the society. This is the second honorary lifetime membership awarded by the Society since its founding in 1938.

Holly Choon Hyang Pettman was selected to receive the 2003 President's Student Leadership and Service Award. She was selected from a pool of over 100 exceptional nominations to receive this competitive award for her strong leadership, service, and dedication to the life of the campus and community.

Brenda Tiefenbruck was recently recognized with the Silver Beaver Award, the highest honor available to Boy Scout volunteers.

Jay Hatch was elected to a two-year term on the Academy of Distinguished Teachers' Twin Cities Steering Committee.

Cap Wigington: An Architectural Legacy in Ice and Stone, by **David V. Taylor** and Paul C. Larson, won the award for best architecture book in the 2002 Minnesota Book Awards.

Publications

Lisa Albrecht's *Sing, Whisper, Shout, Pray!: Feminist Visions for a Just World* (coedited with Jacqui Alexander, Sharon Day, and Mab Segrest), was published by Edgework Books.

Tom Brothen and **Cathy Wambach's** article "Using WebCT Quizzes in a High-Demand Environment" will be published in the May/June issue of *The Technology Source*, an online journal.

Tom Buckley's article "Militiamen to Hawaii: The Vexing Voyage of the Oregon and Washington Naval Militias" appears in the Spring 2003 issue of *COLUMBIA, the Magazine of Northwest History*.

Linda Buturian's essay on and interview with Kathleen Norris, "Flying Domestic," was just published in *OE Journal* (Ashland, Oregon).

Jeanne Higbee is the editor of *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*, published by the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, General College.

Jeanne Higbee, Patrick Bruch, Rashne Jehangir, Dana Lundell, and Karen Miksch cowrote "The Multicultural Mission of Developmental Education: A Starting Point," in *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 19 (2), 47-51 (2003).

Walt Jacobs' article "Learning and Living Difference That Makes a Difference" was reprinted in the book *Annual Editions: Multicultural Education 03/04*. The article originally appeared last year in the journal *Multicultural Education*.

Karen Miksch recently published "Legal Issues in Developmental Education: The Impact of High-Stakes Testing" in *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 19 (2).

Randy Moore and **Karen Miksch** published a paper entitled "Evolution, Creationism, and the Courts" in *The Science Education Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1-12.

Grants

Leon Hsu was awarded a \$74,340 grant from the National Science Foundation for his two-year project entitled "Development of Interactive Problem Solving Tutorials."

Linda Buturian received a \$1,000 grant from the Office for University Women (OUW) for her project, "Women, Words, and Social Change: Annie Brisibe." Brisibe, from the Niger Delta (the oil producing region of Nigeria), is working to stop environmental destruction and exploitation of the land of her people. As part of Buturian's grant, Brisibe will visit the University.

The **Student Parent Help Center** received a grant of \$2,100 from the Office for University Women to support its Advisory Committee for Adult Learners and Student Parents.

Mark Pedelty received a \$15,000 McKnight Arts and Humanities research grant for his three-year project, "An Experiment in Pedagogical Performance and Politics." He also received a \$300 travel grant from the Institute for Global Studies for a trip to Kino Bay Research Center in Sonora, Mexico.

Student news

The **TRIO Student Support Services** program awarded over \$33,000 in grants to 59 General College students, based upon students' academic performance during fall semester. Three students in General College's **Upward Bound program** have been designated as runners-up in this year's Beat the Odds Scholarship competition. **Angie Davis, Luis Rosario, and Maichoua Yang** will each receive a \$500 scholarship. The Children's Defense Fund—Minnesota (www.cdf-mn.org) sponsors the annual competition, which recognizes Minneapolis-St. Paul high school seniors who have overcome significant obstacles on their way to attending college.

Welcome to new staff member

Robyn Poppe, community program specialist, U Day Community.

Promotions

Jill Trites, to senior teaching specialist

Best wishes to—

...retiring staff

Thomas Buckley, associate professor
Patrick Kroll, associate professor

...departing staff

Jennifer Barkley, Greg Choy, Christen Christopherson, Stephen Donaho, Judy Fox, Egyirba High-Ameyaw, Anne Loring, Braden McGarry, Steve Schaus, Lori-Anne Williams

Obituaries

Professor Emeritus **F. Faith Finnberg**, 89, of St. Paul, died on March 30. She joined the staff of General College in 1956 as an instructor and gained tenure in 1960. She retired in 1975. Professor Finnberg taught English literature and composition and French in the college.

Valerie Liston, former biology instructor in the General College, passed away on February 27. Liston, who taught in the college from the mid-60s to the late 70s, was a very student-centered teacher and is still remembered warmly by those she worked with.

Cornelia Williams McCune. See article on page 4.

Revenge of the GEEKS

GC ALUM ROBERT STEPHENS BENDS
THE RULES—AND MAKES HIS MARK

By Andy Steiner

When Robert Stephens was a kid, he made his own rules.

“I’m the last of seven children,” Stephens explains with a laugh, “so for my parents, it’s like I was version 7.0. It was a hands-off childhood. I never got in trouble because my folks had already seen it all. It was like growing up in Amsterdam.”

Such a freewheeling childhood might have been a disaster for some kids, but it turned out to be the ideal environment for Stephens, the energetic, creative mastermind behind Geek Squad, the Minneapolis-based computer repair company whose technicians—or “special agents”—wear clip-on ties, white shirts, and ID badges and cruise around town in a fleet of custom-painted Volkswagen Beetles.

In November, the 50-employee Geek Squad hit the big time when it merged with Best Buy, the Richfield-based national electronics retailer. The merger, which positions Geek Squad to become the largest computer repair company in the nation, comes just nine years after Stephens left General College and a prize job as chief engineer of the University’s Human Factors Research Laboratory to go into business for himself. The company he founded—with just a \$200 initial investment—was Geek Squad. The rest is the stuff of business legend.

Creativity, unleashed

Stephens grew up in Wheeling, Illinois, a comfortable enclave in Chicago’s northwestern suburbs. Because he thought that most creative people became painters or sculptors when they grew up, Stephens attended the Art Institute of Chicago for a year after graduating from high school. It took only a few months of classes, however, for Stephens to realize that the life of a starving artist just wasn’t his bag. This was the early 1990s, and home computing was beginning to take off on a large scale, so Stephens, a self-described “computer-nerd-slash-rebel,” decided to take advantage of what looked like a great opportunity. He quit the Art Institute, packed his bags, and headed up to Minnesota, where he enrolled in the University’s General College. His goal was to earn a degree in computer science.

Stephens quickly made himself at home at the University, earning recognition for his academic achievements—an accomplishment he’d never realized in high school. “For once, I was actually interested in my classes,” Stephens says. “I made the dean’s list my first year.” He also got to know his professors, especially General College humanities professor Robert Yahnke, who Stephens says inspired him to do some of the best work of his college career.

“Studying with Yahnke was a highlight,” Stephens says. “He taught Film 101, but this guy could have taught anything—and it would’ve been a great experience.”

Stephens says he’s convinced that General College was the right choice for a person like him, a guy who’s never looked at life straight on. He appreciated the college’s commitment to helping nontraditional students through the University system, and when he won the job at the Human Factors Research Laboratory, the school’s work-friendly schedule allowed him to work without sacrificing credits.

“General College gave me a chance to get back into the college ‘system,’” Stephens reflects. “And because I think I am the type of person who does not always fit well into a system, it was the perfect match for me.”

For those who know Stephens, it came as no surprise when he abruptly decided to leave the University and go into business

continued on page 14



Robert Stephens

for himself. He's never been good at staying in one place for long, he admits, and the desire to strike out on his own was just too intense to ignore.

"Growing up, I was always encouraged to be creative," Stephens says. "Whatever I said I wanted to do, my family was behind me 100 percent. When I left the University, somehow I knew that this next step would be a significant one for me. And it was. Geek Squad is about using my creative energy in a way that keeps me engaged for the long run."

Up, up, up

From the start, Stephens has always had grand plans for Geek Squad. He's never been shy to say that his ambition for the company is nothing short of "total global domination."

"Right now, we are the best computer support company on the planet," he continues, without a trace of irony. And with Best Buy watching his back, Stephens believes that Geek Squad "can only go up from here."

These days, merger management is taking up much of his time, but Stevens says he also has plans to further develop a side project that's particularly dear

to his heart. It's a new computer training program he named Project Geek Squad, where Stephens and other special agents show economically challenged kids how to assemble working computers out of donated "junk" machines.

"When they first come into the office, these are tough-talking kids," Stephens recalls. "But once they start learning how computers are put together and how they can make a good computer out of a pile of junk, we have their attention. In a strange way, these kids remind me of myself when I was younger. All they need is someone to tell them, 'Go ahead. Tear that computer apart and make me a better one.' You can see that they understand that the possibilities are endless."



NEWS FROM THE RESEARCH CENTER *Dana Britt Lundell, director; Jeanne L. Higbee, faculty chair*

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

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

Library Renovations

Exciting renovations are underway this spring in the CRDEUL library. We were extremely grateful to receive a donation from University alumnus Richard O'Neill, honoring Barbara Lynn Corwin, his late wife and a GC alumna. With his generous donation, we purchased five matching bookshelves and a filing cabinet for storing the expanding CRDEUL library collection of books and journals on developmental education. The library officially reopened on May 19. An open house to honor O'Neill and Corwin is planned for May 29. The CRDEUL library has also been updated this past year to include a new online check-out/check-in system for books, a searchable database for holdings, and an electronic guest book to track visitors to the center.

Publications

The center is pleased to announce the publication of a new book, *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*. The book is downloadable, free of charge, from the CRDEUL Web site. The faculty and staff professional development activities that were the impetus for this book were funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. The first section of the book

serves as an introduction to the concepts of universal design (UD) and universal instructional design (UID). UD proposes that spaces be planned at the outset to meet the needs of potential users and UID builds disability accommodations into the curriculum and incorporates a variety of learning styles. Faculty members from a broad range of disciplines, including anthropology, English composition, mathematics, psychology, history, and biology, provide concrete examples of how they have transformed their teaching in order to provide universal access for all students. Another section of the book focuses on student support services such as first-year experience programs, residence life, learning centers, counseling centers, and disability services. The book concludes with a resource section. The appendices provide a list of assistive technologies and an extensive bibliography.

Forums

The center's monthly forum series continued this spring. The three topics were "The Future and Politics of Developmental Education," "Academic Support Programs for Native Americans in Selected Institutions in New Mexico," and "Reading Between the Lines: The Politics of Reading in College and the Community."

General College Alumni Society Representative

University of Minnesota Alumni Association



Barbara Stephens Foster

Greetings from the General College alumni initiative. As your representative on the University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA) national board, I attend the bimonthly UMAA National Board meetings, and I'd like to bring you up to date on what I learned at the April meeting.

As noted in the last issue of *Access*, the Legislative Network was very active during this legislative session. When you read this column, the session may be over, but as I wrote, we were still in the midst of enlisting University supporters to contact their legislators. Donna Peterson, associate vice president and the University's chief lobbyist, assured us at the board meeting that members of the Legislature read and often respond to messages they receive from their constituents. Your voices, just like your votes, count.

Representatives from the University Foundation and University Relations also reported at the April meeting. Campaign Minnesota has been very successful—and to build on that success, University Relations is mounting a major effort to rekindle pride in the University. Watch for a privately funded marketing blitz in the next few months that will showcase the extraordinary research, teaching, and other activities taking place at the University.

The UMAA kicked off its 100th anniversary celebration at its annual meeting on May 29 in the newly renovated Coffman Union. Upcoming 100th anniversary events to watch for are the 100th birthday party, January 30, 2004, and the 100th anniversary finale, May/June 2004. The January birthday party will include a giant ice sculpture on the Gateway Plaza and the finale will feature a musical extravaganza at Northrop Auditorium. UMAA and GC Society members will receive early notification about both of the events. To learn more about becoming a UMAA member, go to www.alumni.umn.edu. When you join, be sure to check the General College alumni box!

General College Alumni Society

Betsy Taplin and Serena Wright of the General College Development and Alumni Relations office and I met recently to discuss steps for the GC Alumni Society. We are ready to roll up our sleeves to meet the challenge of promoting the college with the intent of building a strong, active GC Alumni Board and Society. How encouraging it was to sit in the UMAA board meeting and find that the University at large is engaged in a similar process of positive imagery. You are our partners in this enterprise. Feel free to send us your thoughts on effective measures we can explore.

Help us rebuild the General College Alumni Society by contacting the GC Development and Alumni Relations Office at www.gen.umn.edu/alumni/form.htm or 612-625-8398, or feel free to e-mail me at foste080@umn.edu. In the next issue I will report on the work of the Alumni Group Relations Work Team and the 100th anniversary celebration and I will pose some thought-provoking questions. Until then, we anticipate hearing from you.

Alumni News

Ray B. Lien of Dixon, California, writes, "After graduation in 1949, I moved to California to seek fame and fortune. Not finding either, I stopped by and spoke to my local Air Force recruiter. Yes, indeed, they would send me to one of their top flight schools because I had a college degree (A.A.). I graduated from air traffic control school and retired with 30 years service in the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and Federal Aviation Administration. I owe it all to my A.A. degree from General College....Higher education has imbued me with a thirst for knowledge. Since my graduation from GC I have gone on to accrue another 60 credits. The University of Minnesota, General College, is the first step for many. I am glad you are still in business."

Jim Bain of Sartell, Minnesota, wrote to remind readers of another aspect of General College history, in response to the last issue of *Access*, which focused on the college's 70-year anniversary. After the United States entered World War II, from 1941 to 1943, Navy pilots-in-training would "fall out" on the street, closed to traffic, in front of Westbrook Hall (then GC's home). He explained that a two-year degree was accepted by the Navy as a four-year degree, allowing a number of GC graduates to become officers.

TELL US
WHAT'S NEW
WITH YOU—

ON THE WEB!

[www.gen.umn.edu/
alumni/form.htm](http://www.gen.umn.edu/alumni/form.htm)

Stay in touch with
General College online!

Access and Excellence CAMPAIGN REPORT

Acting Director of Development and Alumni Relations
Betsy Taplin

Thanks to our generous General College scholarship donors, the college will award more scholarships this academic year than ever before. Did you know this academic year it cost the average GC student \$15,486 to attend the University of Minnesota? (\$6,280 tuition/fees, \$5,696 room/board, \$3,510 expenses such as books, supplies, transportation, and insurance.) Sixty-three percent of GC students receive some form of financial assistance; 19 percent have work-study jobs at the University, and many others work outside of the University. Yet 100 percent of GC students could benefit from a scholarship—it provides an incentive to excel, a much-needed reward, and often serves as the critical factor that keeps a student in school.

Please consider making a gift or a year-long pledge to one of the following scholarship funds. Through June 30, 2003, your gift will be matched dollar for dollar by the Hubbard Family Challenge Grant. That means for each dollar you contribute, you're actually donating two!

General College Academic Scholarship Funded by contributions from alumni and friends of the General College. Scholarships are awarded to GC students with a cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher, demonstrated financial need, and a full, 13-credit registration.

General College Faculty and Staff-Supported Scholarship Awarded to GC students from contributions provided by former and current General College faculty and staff.

General College Study Abroad Scholarship Established this year to provide GC students with opportunities to participate in an international learning experience in conjunction with Global Campus Study Abroad, Office of International Programs.

Virginia M. Binger Student Parent Scholarship Recognizes and rewards eligible student parents who have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during the academic year.

Fred and Earline Estes Family Scholarship Established to encourage and support low-income African-American students who are making academic progress in the General College.

McCutcheon Family Scholarship Offered to GC students who meet low-income and first-generation criteria.

Norman W. Moen Award Awarded to a GC or CLA freshman for undergraduate work in Minnesota history.

H. T. Morse General College Scholarship Rewards students who have been on the GC Dean's List for the first two consecutive semesters of their University enrollment.

Native American Scholarship Provides awards to Native American students of the General College.

Schelske Family Scholarship Benefits first-generation General College students interested in science and technology.

Make a gift in any of the following ways:

Call us. Call 612-626-8560 or 1-800-775-2187 and leave your full name, address, and phone number in addition to the type of credit card, card number, expiration date, and amount of your gift. Please let us know where your gift should be designated.

Submit a gift or pledge online. You may use your credit card to make a gift online—www.foundation.umn.edu/frameset_5.html. This Web site is secure and encrypts all of your personal information. Considering making an online pledge? Fill out and submit an electronic pledge form and your pledge will be processed within one week. You will receive a reminder for payment.

Mail a check. Send a check or money order made payable to the University of Minnesota Foundation/General College along with a letter stating where your gift should be designated.

University of Minnesota Foundation
McNamara Alumni Center
University of Minnesota Gateway
200 Oak Street Southeast, Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55455

GENERAL COLLEGE CAMPAIGN REPORT

Total toward Campaign Minnesota	\$3,192,880
(Goal of \$3,950,000)	
Total toward Hubbard Challenge Grant	\$1,305,103
(Goal of \$1,500,000)	
Total toward Faculty/Staff Campaign	\$189,100
(Goal of \$200,000)	