

# Thriving at Simpson:

## A Guide for Faculty

2009-2010

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Getting Oriented .....</b>	<b>8</b>
The Simpson Community .....	8
Mission.....	9
Simpson’s Strategic Plan: Preparing students to see, serve, and shape the world.....	9
Simpson Traditions .....	10
Fall Convocation.....	10
Lessons and Carols .....	10
Holiday Happenings.....	10
Campus Day.....	10
New Faculty Presentations at the Board of Trustees Lunch.....	10
Transitioning from a Large University to a Small College.....	11
Colleagues.....	11
Academic Politics .....	11
Teaching and Research .....	12
The Student-Teacher Relationship.....	12
Academic Standards.....	13
Collegial Interaction.....	13
Getting Started at Simpson .....	14
Where to Go First.....	14
Meet with Your Department Chair .....	14
Academic Regalia .....	14
College ID and Library Card .....	14
Keys .....	14
Long Distance Access Card.....	14
Ordering Books.....	14
Parking Permits.....	15
Phone and Voicemail.....	15
Photocopying and Office Supplies.....	15
SAC Card.....	15

**Writing Your Syllabi .....16**

Introduction..... 16  
    Context..... 16  
    Tone ..... 16  
    Resources for Developing Syllabi ..... 16  
Course Resources at Simpson..... 17  
    Classroom Media ..... 17  
    Computer Labs and Requests for Software ..... 17  
    Librarians ..... 17  
    Putting Items on Reserve in the Library ..... 18  
    Scholar and Portal Course Sites..... 18  
    Service Learning Resources..... 19  
The Academic Calendar..... 19  
    Finding the Calendar..... 19  
    Midterm and Midterm Grades ..... 20  
    Finals Week Schedule..... 20  
Information to Include in Your Syllabi..... 20  
    Office Hours..... 20  
    Cornerstone Mission Statement ..... 20  
    Course Continuity Plan ..... 21  
Academic Policies..... 22  
    Academic Honesty ..... 22  
    Academic Honesty and Dishonesty Policy ..... 22  
    Accommodations for Students with Disabilities..... 24  
    Cancelling a Class..... 24  
    Class Attendance..... 24  
    Dead Week..... 24  
    Final Exams ..... 24  
    Research with Humans or Animals..... 25  
    Returning Papers and Exams ..... 25  
    Student Privacy ..... 25  
Obtaining Information on Room Assignments and Class Rosters..... 26

**Developing as a Teacher/Scholar.....28**

Teaching, Advising, Scholarship, and Service ..... 28  
Advising..... 30  
    Acquiring Advisees..... 30  
    What to Discuss During an Advising Appointment ..... 30  
    Advising Majors..... 31  
    Course Selection ..... 32  
    Improving as an Advisor..... 33  
Faculty Development Program ..... 33  
    Faculty Development Day ..... 33  
    Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT) ..... 34  
    Mid-semester Evaluations with SurveyMonkey ..... 34  
Teaching Evaluations..... 34

Research During the School Year.....	34
Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion .....	37

**Participating in the Life of the College .....38**

Forum Events .....	38
Athletic Events and Student Performances.....	38
Committee Work.....	38
Budget and Coordinating Committee (BCC).....	38
Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee .....	39
Faculty Personnel Committee .....	39
Other Committees .....	39
Faculty Meetings.....	39
Preparing for Faculty Meetings .....	39
Agenda .....	40
Voting .....	40
The 28-Day Wait.....	40
Reports and Announcements .....	40
Get to Know Other Faculty.....	40

**Managing Time and Stress.....42**

Office Hours.....	42
How to Say No.....	43
Getting Help from Support Staff.....	43
Schedule Time for Yourself.....	44
Handling E-Mail .....	44
Backing Up Files.....	45
Assistance Center.....	45
Simpson’s Chaplain .....	45

**Student Problems .....46**

Dealing with Student Problems .....	46
Resources .....	46
Tradition of Learning and Caring (TLC).....	46
Multicultural and International Student Affairs.....	47
Counseling Services.....	47
Other faculty .....	47
The Hawley Academic Resource Center .....	47
Student Support Services .....	48
Sample Problems .....	48
Unexcused absences from class .....	48
Late or missing work .....	48
Requests for extensions or make-up work .....	48
Emotional problems .....	49
Illness .....	49
Slipping grades.....	49
Special learning or physical needs.....	49

First-Year Deer-Caught-in-The-Headlights Look .....	49
International students .....	50
Hostile behavior towards you personally.....	50
Students Closed Out of Your Class .....	51
<b>Finding Funding.....</b>	<b>52</b>
Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grants.....	52
Diversity Grant.....	52
Course Development and Enhancement Grant.....	52
May Term Enrichment Grants .....	52
International Travel Course Development Grants .....	53
<b>Community Resources.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Indianola Links .....	54
Places to Go, Things to Do .....	54
Adventureland.....	54
Blank Park Zoo .....	54
Covered Bridges of Madison County .....	54
Des Moines Art Center .....	54
Lake Ahquabi State Park .....	54
Living History Farms.....	55
National Balloon Museum .....	55
Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and Prairie Learning Center .....	55
Science Center of Iowa .....	55
State Historical Museum.....	55
Restaurants.....	55
Shopping .....	56
<b>A: Course Evaluation Questions .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>B: Getting Research Done During the School Year: Advice from Faculty at Knox College.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Attitude .....	60
Time .....	60
December Break.....	61
Place .....	61
A Desk .....	61
Deadlines.....	61
Propose a paper for a conference .....	61
Apply for research funds.....	62
Schedule a meeting with an editor at your discipline's annual meeting .....	62
Submit a manuscript for consideration for publication.....	62
Have a goal of how much to write in each block of research time.....	62
Keep Notes On Ideas/Thoughts As They Come To You.....	62
Encourage Students To Work On Research Related To Your Own.....	63
Network With Colleagues.....	63

On campus .....	63
Off campus.....	63
Conferences.....	63
Ask for help.....	64
Ask others to join you on a panel.....	64
Consider getting active in a professional organization .....	64
Keep Up With Current Literature In Your Field .....	64
Keeping Other Obligations Under Control.....	65
Work On Something You Love .....	65
Treat Yourself To Something Nice When You Finish A Project.....	65
Know That Doing Research/Creative Work Is Part Of Your Job.....	65

**C: Suggestions to Department Chairs for the Orientation of New Faculty ....66**

**D: May Term Courses .....68**

Selecting a Course Topic .....	68
Costs.....	68
May Term Enrichment Grants .....	69
Enhancing Enrollment .....	69
Pedagogical Approaches that Work in May Term.....	69
Travel Courses .....	70

**E: The New Curriculum.....71**

The Work of the Learning Programs Working Group (LPWG).....	71
The New Academic Structures .....	72
The New General Education Curriculum .....	73
I. Simpson Seminar (1 Course).....	73
II. Ourselves, Civilization, and the World (7 courses) .....	73
III. Embedded Skills .....	73
IV. Senior Capstone in the Major (1 Course) .....	74

**F: Acronyms and Abbreviations .....75**

# Acknowledgements

---

This guide is adapted from the *Survival/Success Guide for Knox Faculty*, 4th edition (Galesburg, Illinois: Knox College, 2004). The online version of their guide can be found at <http://deptorg.knox.edu/facdev/guide>. Although some sections of this guide were written specifically for faculty at Simpson (or taken from Simpson College handbooks or websites), many sections are virtually identical to the *Survival/Success Guide for Knox Faculty*.

Many thanks to Knox College for their willingness to share their materials.

Special thanks also goes to the members of the Simpson community who helped Sal Meyers to adapt and revise the materials for Simpson, including:

Marci Carrasquillo  
Carolyn Dallinger  
Becca Livingstone  
Jane Moeller  
Chad Roberts  
Bill Schellhorn  
Emily Skow  
Ron Warnet

# Introduction

---

This guide is meant to provide practical suggestions for life in the academy generally and Simpson specifically. Having ourselves been helped by the advice of colleagues here and elsewhere but also being aware of how difficult it can sometimes be to find the right colleague to ask--or even to know the question to ask--we have compiled this collection of peer advice on matters we found to be common to many people's experience. This is not in any way an official guide to Simpson regulations. It is just us talking to you, and hoping that you will find something of use in the conversation.

There are a few themes that ran through our many discussions as we worked on this manual. These may seem obvious and simple, but there are pressures that often make them hard to put into effect. Nonetheless, they're key:

**Ask for help** If you don't know who to ask, ask someone that. Just finding out how one or two people have done something is a huge help in figuring out your own path. What keeps us from asking for help? Maybe not wanting to show how lost we are? That not everything is under control? Not to worry. Everyone else has been there too. Give others the pleasure of sharing whatever wisdom they might have, and then they'll also feel free to turn to you in time.

**Say no** Not all the time, of course. The college can't function, much less thrive, without each of us contributing in a variety of ways to its sustenance and to the ongoing innovation that makes this an interesting and satisfying place in which to work. But you will be asked to do many more things than you can do. When asked, get in the habit of saying that you need a day to think about it--even if you're pretty sure you want to say yes. And then take that time to figure out if this is something that: a) you have the talent or skill for, b) you have a strong interest in or commitment to, and/or c) will help you connect up with other people in the college you're interested in working with.

See also the section "How to say 'No.'"

What keeps us from saying no? The pressures are somewhat different for untenured and tenured. Untenured faculty may be concerned that one has to please tenured faculty, the college administration, and students at every turn. Tenured faculty sometimes think the college's welfare demands that we do everything we possibly can. Yes, the health and welfare of the college depend on each one of us contributing beyond our teaching and research to the service of the institution. But the institution will be best served by having faculty who contribute out of commitment and interest in the ways best suited to each. It's not well served by having faculty worked to a frazzle doing tasks beyond us, or whose value we're not sure of. (A less common problem at Simpson, but still existent, is people who don't say "yes" enough, which makes life even harder for people who have trouble saying "no.")

**Be flexible in the face of change** Just when you've got it all figured out, something changes--a new department chair or dean, changing priorities in your discipline, a

research program concluded (or at a dead end), a shift in student interest away from (or towards) your field, a new baby at home, the debilitating illness of a parent, a sharp enrollment drop (or increase), the loss of a friend, etc. And while we like to claim that the type of education we provide is the best kind for living a life adaptable to the inevitable changes in society (including job environment), somehow, ensconced in our niche, we ourselves sometimes find it hard to change. Some things shouldn't, but which? We challenge ourselves to be as open to new ideas, methods, and strategies as we ask our students to be, at the same time that we work hard to preserve those aspects of our lives central to our mission as teachers, scholars, and community members.

## Getting Oriented

---

We hope to answer a number of "frequently asked questions" in this manual, but inevitably there are more. The first person to go to with almost any question is the chair of your department. If s/he doesn't know the answer, s/he'll most likely know the person to ask next. The Chair should act as a kind of "cruise director" during your first weeks in Indianola. (See Appendix C for "suggestions to department chairs for the orientation of new faculty.") Another ready source of help is the coordinator of the Faculty Development Program, who will meet with new faculty a number of times during the first year, and will help you establish connections with others.

Don't hesitate to ask even the most simple questions. The more you ask in the beginning, the sooner you'll feel "at home."

## The Simpson Community

For more than a century Simpson College has played a vital role in the educational, cultural, intellectual, political and religious life of the United States. Founded in 1860 and named to honor Methodist Bishop Matthew Simpson (1811-1884), Simpson College is a nationally recognized, regional liberal arts college. Affiliated with the United Methodist Church, the college is non-sectarian in spirit and accepts students without regard for race, creed, or national origin.

Although the heart of the college remains grounded in the liberal arts tradition, Simpson College is dedicated to excellence in higher education in its many contemporary forms. About 1500 students live and attend class on Simpson's home campus twelve miles south of Des Moines in Indianola, Iowa. An additional five hundred students attend classes at campuses in West Des Moines and Ankeny, Iowa. The college offers B.A., B.M., M.A.C.J., and M.A.T degrees.

The faculty at Simpson College are colleagues who share their enthusiasm for liberal learning, critical thinking, teaching innovation, and excellence in the classroom, laboratory, performance hall and studio.

***Mission Statement.*** Simpson College is an independent, selective, church-related, comprehensive liberal arts college dedicated to excellence in higher education.

The Simpson College community is equally committed to:

- Promoting integrative learning that enables students of all ages to develop intellectual and practical skills
- Nurturing values which foster personal worth and individuality within a creative, diverse and just community
- Graduating students who continue to grow as free, responsible and fulfilled individuals in the world of family, work, service and scholarship
- Drawing upon our relationship with the United Methodist Church and our religious traditions that guide us on issues of personal integrity, moral responsibility, social justice and global citizenship

***Simpson's Strategic Plan: Preparing students to see, serve, and shape the world.***

Simpson's strategic plan outlines five learning initiatives to carry the college into the future:

- **Intellectual and practical skills:** A set of skills abilities including written and oral communication, team work, information literacy, quantitative literacy, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, inquiry and analysis that provides students with the necessary tools to live productively in the 21st century.
- **Integrative learning:** Multidisciplinary approaches to learning that include cross disciplinary classroom learning experiences and experiential opportunities such as internships, study abroad, involvement with community partnerships, undergraduate research and creative projects, volunteer service and service learning. These multidisciplinary approaches provide opportunities to apply knowledge in real world settings and do not sacrifice on subject matter, but promote “integrative” education, combining disciplines and combining academic and non-academic experiences.
- **Living and working in a global context:** The development of skills and knowledge to function effectively as a responsible global citizen in the 21st century through involvement in international and/or domestic cross-cultural experiences and through promoting “global perspectives” across the curriculum that assist students with developing cultural competence and an awareness and understanding of social, economic, geopolitical and sustainability issues within a global context.
- **Leadership:** Leadership occurs through the collective action of individuals and groups working on shared goals and aspirations to facilitate positive social change at the institution or in the community. It is an inclusive process that promotes the values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment, citizenship and service.
- **Personal and social responsibility:** Development of individual traits, skills, and values including intercultural understanding, ethics, civic engagement, and lifelong learning in order to live a life of moral character while also developing

and acting upon one's obligation to be a responsible and contributing member of the communities in which one lives and works.

## **Simpson Traditions**

***Fall Convocation.*** Fall Convocation is a ceremony that welcomes students to campus and kicks off the start of the year. The main address is given by the person who won the senior faculty award during commencement the previous year. All first year students are required to attend. Convo runs from 12:30 to just before 2:00 on the first Thursday of the semester. You'll receive e-mail message from the dean's office letting you know what time and where to meet. We'll process from there into Smith Chapel. When we process, we line up by rank and by years of service. Instructors are at the beginning of the line and full professors are at the end. Within each rank, faculty newer to the rank should be in front of people who have had that rank longer.

***Lessons and Carols*** is a musical worship service that honors Advent and celebrates the Christmas season. Members of the Simpson College faculty, staff and student body read the lessons, and the Simpson College Women's Chorale and College Choir perform the carols. This service is usually held the second weekend of December.

***Holiday Happenings*** is the holiday celebration for faculty and staff. It is held on a Friday evening in December at the end of finals week. Finals week starts on a Monday and ends Thursday. Friday evening, after the students have left campus, all faculty and staff on campus are invited to a festive dinner on campus. The program held during dessert includes entertainment and the recognition of people who have served the college for various periods of time. There are a couple faculty members who have served Simpson for over 50 years!

***Campus Day*** is a long-standing tradition in which the community participates in a variety of service projects around campus and in the greater Indianola community in the morning, followed by lunch together and afternoon activities. All classes are cancelled for the day in order to allow students, faculty, and staff to participate. Campus Day is held on a Wednesday in April; don't forget to double check the date when you put together your spring semester syllabi. To learn more about the history of campus day, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/library/research/campusday.html>.

***New Faculty Presentations at the Board of Trustees Lunch.*** The Board of Trustees meets on campus at the end of each semester. Students address the trustees at the December meeting. Traditionally, the new tenure-track faculty present a program at the meeting the last day of May Term. DON'T faint! We aren't asking you to tap dance, do magic or perform any other extraordinary talent! We ask that you just briefly address the Trustees on your year here at Simpson. These wonderful people are very interested in our new faculty, knowing how important you are to the success of the college, and they love to hear just a quick (2-3 minutes) capsule of your year here. Just to give you an idea of what past "newbies" have talked about: Where are you from? What attracted you to Simpson? Anything special happen this year? What are your goals as an instructor?

## Transitioning from a Large University to a Small College

Faculty often arrive at Simpson from a large university setting, whether directly from graduate training or from a previous teaching position. The transition to the small liberal arts setting is sometimes confusing and occasionally mysterious. Life in a large department in a research university is often very different from that at a small college, and while the academic training received there got you the job, the collegial, political, professional and interpersonal training may have prepared you for a different environment than the one you'll find at Simpson. The following subject areas and words of wisdom reflect the experiences of some of the faculty who have encountered significant differences in living within these two academic settings. Because large universities are not all the same, not all of the distinctions described below will match your own personal experiences at large institutions.

**Colleagues.** While, as graduate students in large research institutions, some of us may have experienced very hierarchic departments, Simpson strives to foster an environment in which junior and senior faculty are colleagues, peers. New faculty can create undue stress for themselves if they continue to think in a university paradigm. For instance, the creation of 8:00 a.m. classes does not mean the untenured faculty will be forced to teach them while their seniors sleep late. If you are unable to teach at that hour or feel you are doing more than your share, you may say so. In general, the faculty members at Simpson want you to feel supported and to be successful. If you do not feel supported, you should talk to the dean. If you feel as though speaking out will jeopardize your chances of getting tenure, there is a serious problem--either you are imagining a nonexistent paradigm or someone in your department needs to have a reality adjustment.

But newcomers should consider the manner in which they voice their views to colleagues. Too frequent complaints or suspiciousness of others' motives are likely to irritate. Additionally, being too quick to assume that one's research, service and teaching are beyond that of one's colleagues does little to enhance one's reputation for collegiality. As would be reasonable in any setting, pick your battles and proceed diplomatically.

Beware of looking for hidden agendas and of being overly concerned at disagreements between colleagues. They're much less likely here than at a bigger place to end up as battle lines in a tenure decision. Be an articulate advocate of your positions and a generous colleague; others are likely to reciprocate.

**Academic Politics.** Many university departments are highly evolved pecking orders with clearly defined boundaries and dangerous pitfalls for the uninitiated. With a thousand or more faculty in residence overall and where anonymity and isolation are key factors, power-mongering is frequent. Empire builders and fiefdom-overlords rely on the bureaucracy of the large institution to sustain their control. In a small setting such as Simpson, this is more difficult (though not impossible) to achieve.

Many new faculty experience settling-in tensions, old hand/young Turk frictions, crusty temperaments, eccentrics, even the occasional jerk, and may become wary based on the

university paradigm. You needn't. Here junior faculty have direct and open access to senior faculty in their departments, faculty in other departments, faculty on standing committees, as well as to the administration. One can ask questions with impunity and go to the Dean for confidential advice if a problem crops up. Size and visibility create a check and balance system here. Occasionally, an individual may attempt to wield power over or undermine a colleague. If in the face of power abuse or plain old nastiness, you were previously advised to put up and shut up until tenure, you don't have to do that here. Faculty are not isolated and impotent. In most cases where a new faculty member has finally confided to someone regarding a conflict, solutions have been found. In most cases, truly egregious behavior can be stopped. But this isn't Utopia U. and it would be unfair to imply injustices have never occurred.

One has to be savvy and make choices along political lines. For instance, justice can be relative to the nature of the particular seated administration and the cadre of current tenured faculty. There are politics at Simpson, though the dimension tends not to be as clandestine or isolating as in large university settings. Again, pick your battles. But if you find yourself adopting a new persona to cope with a conflict, there is a serious issue at hand and you should seek advice. In addition to talking to folks here, colleagues on other campuses can be a useful source of advice, and helpful in giving one a sense of perspective.

***Teaching and Research.*** Simpson is a teaching institution. It really means that. Many of you will have read university handbooks indicating that teaching, service, and scholarship were equally balanced in terms of promotion and review. Many of you will also have gotten the subliminal message from your former mentors that that isn't necessarily the case and that "publish or perish" is alive and well on American campuses. Many of us had professors who were shining examples of the prestigious scholar with the big grants who is a completely job-secure poor teacher. Simpson expects scholarship and celebrates scholarly success, but Simpson expects excellence in the classroom. You'll want to find a way to balance research with the demands of teaching. This can be a special challenge for those fresh from graduate school with its often single-minded focus on the research side. Given the teaching load at Simpson, you just cannot get as much research done as you did in graduate school. See the following section on "Developing as a Teacher/Scholar" for more on this.

***The Student-Teacher Relationship.*** At the heart of the Simpson mission is the student-teacher relationship. As a result, the expectations for out-of-classroom contact can be high – much higher than is typical at large universities. Such contact is one of the main joys of teaching here, but the demands can also be difficult to manage for junior and senior faculty alike. See the section on Managing Time for help on this, especially the section on Office Hours.

Simpson students expect you to know their names, and they expect you to take an interest in their lives outside of class. That doesn't mean you ought to become close friends with your students, but it does mean that you should express interest in their extracurricular

pursuits. Students appreciate it when faculty attend their athletic competitions, music recitals, plays, and other events.

***Academic Standards.*** Teachers new to Simpson can find it takes a while to establish balanced expectations in terms of student workloads. Expectations should increase depending on the level of the course, but exactly what that means in terms of amount of assigned reading and number of assignments varies from one institution to another as well as from one department to another. While one should expect that writing standards will be high, one should not necessarily expect the same levels of excellence and sophistication one is capable of oneself. This is another area where talking to colleagues is invaluable. You might also consider asking for syllabi from your departmental colleagues. This will give you an overview of what is taught, how it is taught, how subject areas are developed and linked, syllabus writing styles, prior academic preparation for your courses, as well as a sense of what academic expectations are like.

***Collegial Interaction.*** Many new faculty arrive imbued with passionate ideas and a desire to right the wrongs of academia. These are good and useful qualities and partly why we were hired in the first place. How we go about implementing these ideals will help determine how smooth a transition we experience and how quickly we are able to change the world.

It is important to take time to ask questions and to learn the relationships within your department and within the college. It is easy to assume that if something is done differently than you've seen in done before, it's being done poorly. Those of us on a mission may have a tendency to assume that our ideas are novel or so obvious we can't fathom why they haven't been thought of before. Take the time to find out if in fact they have been considered before and if so, what the impediments were then. It is often the case that there is institutional history that will explain why procedures or policies are what they are. This does not preclude the possibility that change is desperately needed. One must consider that an idea may be one whose time has finally come, but earlier proponents of just such an idea may still be around and ought to be sought out for information and advice. Change is much easier in a supportive environment.

If you identify a serious problem that you feel your colleagues have allowed to slide, be generous in your approach. You may find the subject you feel you are introducing is one already of great concern to your department and the faculty at large and one that is a part of an ongoing debate with much larger ramifications. If you carefully research your position in terms of your department and the institution, you will be much more effective in presenting your point and in drawing support for it. An impatient or even hostile attitude will obviously only prejudice your position. Compassion and generosity are valuable touchstones of collegiality.

## Getting Started at Simpson

**Where to Go First.** The first place to go is Human Resources on the second floor of Hillman Hall. The director of human resources will make sure that the necessary paperwork gets completed to get you on payroll and signed up for the appropriate benefit options. The Director of Human Resources will also get you started at obtaining most of the other things you'll need to start at Simpson (e.g., college ID, PR photo, long-distance access code, parking permit, etc.).

**Meet with Your Department Chair.** Different departments do things differently. For example, each department has a budget through the library so that faculty can request to have specific books added to the collection (first-year tenure track faculty are also provided with an additional library fund). Some departments divide this money so each faculty member has an allotted amount to spend, other departments work jointly to determine how to best spend this money. Your department chair is also a good person to ask for advice on developing your May Term course.

**Academic Regalia.** Faculty process in full academic regalia three times during the year: Fall Convocation in August, Honors Convocation in April, and Commencement in May. If you do not own your own cap and gown, please rent your academic regalia by the Simpson College Bookstore (fax 515-691-1270; phone 515-961-1529; or email [0447mgr@fheg.follett.com](mailto:0447mgr@fheg.follett.com)). The rental fee allows you to keep the robe for the entire academic year.

**College ID and Library Card.** The photos for faculty ID cards are taken in Student Development (located on the lowest level of Brenton Student Center); however, Human Resources needs to have provided them with information to get you added to the ID card system. Thus, be sure to talk to someone in Human Resources before you go to get your photo ID in Student Development. Once you have the card itself, go to the library and have them add a library bar code to the back of your ID card. You'll need the library bar code to check out books and films and to access the library's online databases from off campus.

**Keys.** Most new faculty members get office and building keys with the assistance of their building secretary. A couple of the buildings (Art Center and Blank Performing Arts Center) have part-time secretaries who do not work in the summer. These faculty should contact Human Resources for assistance in getting keys.

**Long Distance Access Card.** Your authorization code is a seven-digit number that will allow you to make long distance calls from any phone (or fax machine) on campus. You'll need an authorization code to make long-distance calls, to call toll free numbers, and to make calling card calls. Information Services (located in the basement of McNeill Hall) can provide you with your authorization code.

**Ordering Books.** Book order forms always seem to be due earlier than you expect. Spring book adoptions are due October 1<sup>st</sup>. May and summer book adoptions are due March 1<sup>st</sup>. Fall book adoptions are due April 1<sup>st</sup>. The book order form can be found on

the Teaching and Learning page of the Faculty Development website. The Faculty Development website is located at <http://www.simpson.edu/faculty>.

***Parking Permits.*** Contact Security (located on the landing between the front door of Brenton Student Center and the bookstore) to get a hangtag to put in your car.

***Phone and Voicemail.*** Information Services is the place to contact if you are having problems with the features on your phone or with your voicemail. Instructions about how to initially set up your voicemail box are available at <http://www.simpson.edu/is/telephone/xpressions.html>. You can access your Simpson voicemail from anywhere by calling 515-962-3000. To learn about the features on your phone and voicemail, visit <http://10.2.6.5/phoneguidelive/phoneguide.aspx>. This site contains video instructions as well as user manuals for both the phone and voicemail, but it can only be accessed from on campus.

***Photocopying and Office Supplies.*** Talk to your building secretary about how to make photocopies and how to obtain office supplies. More than likely, your building secretary already has whatever office supplies you need, if not, she can order them.

***SAC Card.*** SAC is the Simpson Athletic Club. SAC members may use the gyms, fitness room, swimming pool and sauna, racquetball courts, locker rooms and lockers (although you'll need to provide your own lock). SAC memberships are available to faculty members and their spouse and dependents at no charge. All members must have their membership cards clearly visible when using the facility.

# Writing Your Syllabi

---

## Introduction

The syllabi you write reflect both the learning experiences you have planned for your students and the academic policies and calendar of Simpson College. The sections that follow provide explanations regarding information that ought to be included in a syllabus: your office hours, the cornerstone mission statement associated with your course, the course's continuity plan, the academic honesty policy, and the policies concerning "dead week" and final exams. Before addressing the policies, we'd like to share a few thoughts regarding context and tone.

**Context.** As you put together your courses, be aware of how the course fits into the curriculum. Is this course part of the Cornerstone Studies program (i.e., general education)? Does it count for one or more majors or minors? Does it have prerequisites? Particularly in the humanities, many of the upper level courses for majors are also part of the Cornerstone Studies program and as a result do not have any prerequisites. That doesn't mean you can't hold the students to high standards, but it does mean that your assumptions regarding the background knowledge and skills of the students may not be accurate.

**Tone.** Be aware of the tone you are using when you write your syllabi. Think about describing your course in terms of students' opportunities to learn rather than required assignments. Many instructors find it tempting to translate their pet peeves into a list of prohibitions accompanied by the threat of sanctions: no cell phone use or text messaging, no baseball caps, etc. Simpson students are unlikely to respond favorably to such language. That does not mean that your syllabus should not address issues of civility, but students tend to respond more favorably if you describe the respectful behavior you expect of all your students than if you describe the disrespectful behavior you will not tolerate.

**Resources for Developing Syllabi.** A wide variety of resources are available online to help you develop your syllabi. Here are a few places to start.

- An on-line tutorial for developing effective courses is available through the Science Education Resource Center at Carleton College (SERC): <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/course设计>. Although this tutorial was originally designed for geosciences faculty (and utilizes geosciences examples), it is useful for all faculty.
- Sample syllabi

World Lecture Hall is an online collection of syllabi and course materials from an extraordinarily wide variety of courses: <http://web.austin.utexas.edu/wlh>

Syllabus Finder is a search engine specific to syllabi: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/tools/syllabi>

- Ken Bain has studied the teaching practices and syllabi of the best college teachers. He describes his findings in *What the Best College Teachers Do*. He has labeled the syllabi of these effective teachers as *promising syllabi*. You can learn about the promising syllabus via an online PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.montclair.edu/center/promisingsyllabushr/default.htm>

## Course Resources at Simpson

**Classroom Media.** The media resources (e.g., VCR/DVD player, projector, SmartBoard) available in the classrooms vary by classroom. To determine what's available in your classrooms, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/library/about/medialoc.html> (see Obtaining Information on Room Assignments and Class Rosters below). Some buildings have equipment that can be checked out from the building's main office. For example, Carver Hall and Wallace Hall each have a computer cart with 15 or more laptops that you can reserve for classroom use. Media Services in the library also has equipment available. Contact them (x1553) at least two working days in advance and they will deliver the equipment. Media Services is also a good place to call if you are having trouble with a piece of equipment or to receive training on how to use a piece of equipment.

**Computer Labs and Requests for Software.** Simpson has a variety of computer labs available to any student, teaching labs, and laptop carts. See <http://www.simpson.edu/is/labs> for more information on the location of these labs.

If you are planning to use the computer labs for classes (Carver, McNeill, Smith Chapel Listening Lab, West Des Moines) or any of the laptop carts (Biology, Chemistry, Foreign Language, Math, Wallace) and you know you will need software installed in addition to the basic setup (this includes Microsoft Office 2007, Internet Explorer, and Adobe Acrobat Reader), please let Information Services know by August 1, so they can work with it ahead of time. They will need to know what software to load, where to get it (CD from you, download from the internet, etc.), and all the lab computers or laptops you will need it to be installed on. Loading programs on these computers is not as easy as it may sound. Frequently the programs need to be loaded in a specific order so that each program will work properly. Information Services can add programs during the semester, but it takes time. Please contact about your needs as soon as you are aware of those needs.

**Librarians.** Although the library has many useful resources, the most useful are the librarians. If you have questions about anything library related, contact one of them. You may even want to speak with the consulting librarian who works with your department. The consulting librarian/faculty liaison program is described at <http://www.simpson.edu/library/consultinglibrarians/consultprog.html>. Click on consulting librarian to determine which librarian works with your department.

Simpson also has an Instruction Librarian. Consider asking the instruction librarian to come help you teach class for a day. Your class could receive a tour of the library, reference assistance with a class assignment, orientation sessions for the library catalog

or any of the other electronic databases (EBSCOhost, JSTOR, etc.), or subject-specific instruction in research techniques and specialized reference materials.

***Putting Items on Reserve in the Library.*** Items to be read for specific classes may be put on reserve (under your name and class) at the circulation desk. Items for use by a few students or independent study should not be put on reserve. Fill out a faculty reserve form available at the circulation desk. Library materials (books, photocopies of articles, videos/DVDs, CDs) may be put on reserve along with your personal books for a semester. You may choose from the following reserve statuses for each item: two hour closed (library use only); two hour open (overnight use); three day (open). A maximum of three copies per article will be put on reserve for large classes; usually one copy will suffice. Please allow two working days after submitting your form with the materials before requesting students to use these items. The library cannot be held responsible for replacement costs if a personal copy is lost. Reserve items are listed in the online catalog.

***Scholar and Portal Course Sites.*** Simpson offers two main ways for faculty to put learning resources online for students in their classes: Scholar and portal course sites. Both of these resources are password protected and only the students in your classes can access them.

Both Scholar and the portal course sites allow you to

- Put course materials (e.g., syllabi, handouts) online
- Have online discussions
- Have students contribute to building a wiki

Scholar will also allow you to do the following things (which are not possible on the portal course sites):

- have students turn in assignments online
- give students assignment feedback online (even if the assignment was turned in as hard copy in class)
- allow students to see their own assignment and exam grades online

The portal course sites have 2 main advantages over Scholar

- Any announcement you post for your students in your course site will automatically show up on those students' main portal page. Thus, if you are sick and are cancelling class, you can inform students of that by posting an announcement in your portal course site. When students log on to their portal site to check their e-mail, they will see your announcement in the "My Involvement" section of the screen.
- Most people find it quicker and easier to put materials on a portal course site.

You may choose to use only a portal course site, only a Scholar site, or use the two together. For example, you might put course materials and announcements on the portal course site, and have students turn in assignments and check their grades on Scholar.

To request a portal course site, contact [portal@simpson.edu](mailto:portal@simpson.edu). To request a Scholar site, contact [chuck.johnson@simpson.edu](mailto:chuck.johnson@simpson.edu). When you make your request, be sure to include the course name, department name, course number, and section letter (e.g., Intro Psych, Psyc 101 B). As soon as Information Services has created what you've requested, you'll receive an e-mail from them. Please request the site two weeks before the semester starts so that Information Services has enough time to create everyone's sites.

***Service Learning Resources.*** Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. The Service Hub, part of the Center for Vocation and Integrative Learning (CVIL) can assist you in identify and forging relationships organizations in which students can engage in service-learning for your specific course.

You can learn more about CVIL at <http://www.simpson.edu/cvil>.

Information about the Service Hub is available at <http://www.simpson.edu/service>.

And a list of organizations in which students can engage in service-learning is available at <http://www.simpson.edu/service/opportunities.html>.

## The Academic Calendar

***Finding the Calendar.*** If you look at the main Simpson webpage ([www.simpson.edu](http://www.simpson.edu)), you'll see "Calendar" in two different places. These actually take you to two different calendars. The best calendar to use planning your course schedules is the one under the heading Academics. This will take you to a page that shows the first day of class, days in which classes don't meet, etc. The Calendar link located in the upper left hand corner of the screen takes you to the campus calendar. That calendar is a comprehensive calendar which displays all the athletic events and student affairs events in addition to academic events.

The Academic Calendar shows *Fall Convocation* (at the beginning of fall semester) and *Honors Convocation* (at the end of spring semester). These convocations will not interfere with any of your classes; however, if you teach at 2:00 on those Thursdays, you might find yourself a few minutes late to class. You might want to remind your students if you are late on those days, they should wait for you. All faculty are expected to participate in both convocations dressed in full academic regalia.

In the fall, classes do not meet on Labor Day, Fall Break, or Thanksgiving Recess. In the spring, classes do not meet during Spring Break or Easter Recess.

The date of mid-term is identified on the calendar. Mid-term grades for all students are due in the registrar's office soon after (the exact date is noted on the calendar). You are not required to give a mid-term exam on or near the midterm date; the only requirement is to submit midterm grades.

The academic calendar also identifies the last day that students can add or drop courses. The last day to drop a course is roughly 2 weeks after the first day of class. If a student drops a course before that date, the course never appears on the student's transcript.

The last day to withdraw a course is noted on the calendar. This date is roughly a week after students receive their midterm grades. If a student withdraws from a class, the course appears on their transcript with the W for withdraw. Withdrawing from a class does not influence the student's GPA. If a student wishes to withdraw from a class after the withdraw deadline, the student needs to complete an academic petition. Such petitions are usually granted if the student cannot complete the course because of medical or family emergency; petitions to withdraw are not granted if the reason for the request is because the student is unable to pass the course.

***Midterm and Midterm Grades.*** Midterm is always marked on the College calendar; however, that does not mean you have to give an exam on that day. Nor does it mean that you have to give one midterm and one final (that's actually not very good pedagogical practice). You may give as many midterm exams as you want. The reason that the date of midterm is identified in the calendar is that all faculty have to turn in midterm grades for all students 2 days later. Thus you need to have had students complete some work, and you need to have graded that work in order to submit grades.

You can submit your grades online via StormFront; however, keep in mind that there is a time limit (for security reasons). Calculate all your grades first and then go to StormFront to submit them. Here's how:

- Log onto the StormFront portal (<https://stormfront.simpson.edu>)
- Click on My StormFront and then on Faculty Information
- Click on Grading
- Select the current term and click Submit. You'll see a list of the courses you are scheduled to teach along.
- Select Midterm (when you submit your final grades, you'll select final) from the dropdown menu; select a course and click Submit
- After entering your grades, click Submit.

***Finals Week Schedule.*** The final exam week scheduled is determined by the registrar. Click on the "Final Exam Week" link in the appropriate semester of the academic calendar to determine when your finals are to be offered.

## **Information to Include in Your Syllabi**

***Office Hours.*** Faculty are expected to have at least 6 hours of office hours per week. Keep in mind that faculty meetings are Tuesdays from 12:30-2:00 and new faculty orientation is Mondays from 12-2. For more information on office hours see the section on office hours in Managing Time.

***Cornerstone Mission Statement.*** Courses that can be used to fulfill Cornerstone requirements should include the Cornerstone mission statement in the syllabus. The

mission statements are the paragraphs in the course catalog that describe the cornerstone perspectives. For example, Cornerstone Perspective 1: The Western Tradition is described on p. 94 of the catalog in the following way:

In examining the Western Tradition, Simpson students become aware that Western values and outlook are rooted in the classical and Judaeo-Christian traditions originating in the ancient and medieval periods, and in the modern tradition originating in the eighteenth century enlightenment. Therefore, each student takes one course in the classical and Judaeo-Christian traditions and a second course in the modern tradition from those offered by the departments of history, English, and philosophy.

The catalog is available online at <http://www.simpson.edu/courses> as a PDF file so you can fairly easily cut and paste the appropriate mission statement into your syllabus.

***Course Continuity Plan.*** Simpson has been working on the development of a plan that would allow us to continue to provide instruction in the case of a campus-wide shutdown or interruption. Although it is unlikely that we will need to use it, we need to have a plan in place should a natural disaster or other event force the closing of the campus for more than a few days.

A basic component of our academic continuity plan is to request that all faculty members include the following statement in their syllabi or other materials provided to students at the beginning of each semester:

Should the normal instructional activity on the campus be shortened or interrupted by a campus-wide closing, students will receive information from the instructor or other representative of the college about when and if the course might be continued or completed via Internet, telephone, or United States mail.

Each department has been asked to identify courses that can likely be continued in the event of a campus-wide closing. Talk to your department chair about the continuity plan for your department in general and for the courses you are teaching in particular. If you are teaching a course that has been identified as one that might be continued during a campus-wide closing, please give some thought as to how this might be done. Would it be possible for your students to continue with the course by U.S. mail? Could you use the Internet for assignments and to communicate with your students?

## Academic Policies

For the complete list of academic policies, consult the Faculty Handbook or visit <http://www.simpson.edu/academics/policies>.

**Academic Honesty.** Instructors should include a statement about academic integrity and plagiarism in their syllabi. The following statement has been approved by the faculty as the one to be included in syllabi:

In all endeavors, Simpson College expects its students to adhere to the strictest standards of honesty and integrity. In keeping with the College's mission to develop the student's critical intellectual skills, while fostering personal integrity and moral responsibility, each student is expected to abide by the Simpson College rules for academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) any form of cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misreporting any absence as college-sponsored or college-sanctioned, submitting a paper written in whole or in part by someone else, or submitting a paper that was previously submitted in whole or in substantial part for another class without prior permission. If the student has any questions about whether any action would constitute academic dishonesty, it is imperative that he or she consult the instructor before taking the action. For further guidance on these rules and their sanctions, please see pages 30-31 of the college catalog.

**Note to Faculty:** In the 2007-2009 catalog, the policy was on pages 72-73. The 2009-2010 catalog is currently being printed and the page numbers are not yet known.

**Academic Honesty and Dishonesty Policy.** The full policy can be found in the course catalog, the student handbook, and the faculty handbook. Here's what it says:

### **Academic Honesty and Dishonesty Policy Statement**

Honesty is expected of all members of the Simpson community. Honesty in all academic work is required of all students. Dishonesty in academic work robs all of us of our integrity in learning and demeans the natural talents we have for creative living.

Each faculty member is urged to take a strong and positive stand for honesty and independent work at the first meeting of each class and, as appropriate, intermittently thereafter. Further, the college policy should be stated in appropriate printed course materials and circulated to the students of each class. Emphasis should be placed upon the development of honesty and integrity at Simpson.

Dishonesty, generally identified as cheating and plagiarism, is not acceptable behavior at Simpson.

## Penalties for Dishonesty

The penalty for any form of academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration) substantiated by firm evidence is:

1. failure of the course;
2. failure of the assignment; or
3. the requirement that the work be redone with a substituted assignment.

The instructor may choose from the above options to reflect how knowing, intentional, or serious he or she judges the incident to be. *All cases of substantiated academic dishonesty must be reported to the student's academic advisor and the Dean for Academic Affairs.*

In a case in which the student has intentionally committed academic dishonesty and the instructor has determined that the student will fail the course, the instructor will immediately enter a grade of "F" as the final grade.

If the instructor determines that an act of plagiarizing or cheating is such that the student will fail the course, the student will NOT be allowed to withdraw even if the date of such determination is still within the withdrawal period. A grade of "F" will be entered immediately for that student. In all cases of intentional academic dishonesty the instructor will report it to the Academic Dean and the student's advisor and a record will be entered into the student's file.

If the instructor determines that the academic dishonesty is such that just the assignment or test will be failed, but not the whole course, then the student will be allowed to withdraw from the class if the withdrawal is processed within the withdrawal period. In all cases of intentional academic dishonesty the instructor will report it to the Academic Dean and the student's advisor and a record will be entered into the student's file.

Upon the second report of substantiated academic dishonesty, the Dean for Academic Affairs will convene the Academic Council to recommend appropriate punishment, which may include suspension, expulsion, or academic probation.

If a student wishes to appeal a charge of substantiated academic dishonesty, he or she may request a hearing before the Academic Appeals Committee. The student(s) shall present to the Registrar of the College a written appeal stating clearly what is being appealed and the rationale. The instructor shall present the evidence to the committee. The committee's decision shall be final.

In cases of suspected academic dishonesty that cannot be substantiated by firm evidence, the instructor may give the student a warning and may require the student to redo the assignment. In a case where academic dishonesty is strongly suspected but cannot be substantiated, the instructor will issue a formal warning, along with a report to the academic advisor and the Dean for Academic Affairs. Repeated instances of suspected academic dishonesty may lead to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, or academic probation, at the discretion of the academic dean.

***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.*** The policy regarding accommodations for disabilities is in the course catalog (see pages 25-26). It's good practice to include this information in your syllabi. What follows is an example of how you might do this:

I am interested in providing reasonable accommodations (e.g., note-takers, adapted testing, time extensions) for students' physical, sensory, learning, and psychological disabilities. In order for me to do so, the student's disability needs to be documented with the Hawley Academic Resource Center. I cannot assist a student with accommodations that I don't know about, so if you need something, please make sure that you either approach me yourself or that you ask Todd Little to do so on your behalf. If you have any further questions on the policies and services for students with disabilities, please refer to pages 25-26 of the Simpson College 2007-2009 General Catalog.

To learn more about accommodation procedures, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/hawley/dr/procedures.html>.

***Cancelling a Class.*** If you need to cancel one of your classes (e.g., because you are sick or snow is preventing you from making it to campus), contact your building secretary to make arrangements to have signs put up on your classroom doors so students know class will not be meeting. In addition, be sure to contact the academic dean's office to let them know.

***Class Attendance.*** It is up to you to clarify your attendance policy to your students. Students are expected to attend class, but there is no college-wide policy describing the consequences of missing class. Please note that students may not be penalized for missing class due to college-sponsored activities so long as the student informs the instructor before the event and completes all work assigned for the absence. Those scheduled such events will send you a list of participants in the event.

Although there is no college-wide policy regarding missing class, please do take attendance. For federal financial aid purposes, instructors need to be able to verify the last date of attendance of any student who withdraws from a course.

***Dead Week.*** The phrase "dead week" refers to the last week of classes before finals week. According to the Faculty Handbook, no exams (except for lab exams and review quizzes) may be given during the last week of the semester. Papers may be due during the last week, however.

***Final Exams.*** You may use your scheduled final exam time for an exam or as the due date for a paper or project; however, the time designated for the final must be the due date for the final requirement. It can be very tempting to tell students that they may have until the end of finals week to complete their final paper, but that strategy will work against you – the due date to submit your final grades is based on the final exam date.

In addition to including the final exam date and time in your syllabus, consider including a brief statement regarding the college policy about students requesting exams to be rescheduled. According to the Faculty Handbook, "if a student has more than two final exams during one day, he/she may request of the professor that a third and/or fourth exam be changed to another day suitable to the instructor(s)."

***Research with Humans or Animals.*** If you are going to ask students to use live animals for class, you will need to get permission to do so by completing an Animal Care and Use Form. It's available online at <http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/resources>.

If you are going to ask students to collect data from human participants, you will need to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You do not need to get IRB approval if the research is being conducted during class with your own students under your watchful eye; however, if students are surveying others outside of class, you do need IRB approval. The IRB policy is online at <http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/resources/irb.html>. There is a link to the application form at the bottom of that webpage.

***Returning Papers and Exams.*** All graded work needs to be returned to students in a private manner. That means you may not leave a stack of graded papers or exams outside your office door for students to pick up (doing so isn't just a violation of college policy, it's a violation of the FERPA). Maintaining student privacy also means you can't send a student's paper home with a friend. If you can't return a student's paper directly to that student during class time, talk to your building secretary about leaving the papers with her. The building secretaries can keep the graded papers in a safe, locked location, and students can visit the main office in the building to pick up their papers.

If students do not pick up their papers at the end of the semester, don't dispose of them right away. Students often return two or three years later requesting graded papers. Students need to submit a collection of papers for their Writing Competency II Portfolio (see <http://www.simpson.edu/hawley/writing/portfolio.html> for more details about this portfolio). Students must have earned at least a C- on a paper in order to be able to include it in their portfolio – and that grade needs to be written on the paper by the professor.

When you are ready to get rid of papers and exams that haven't been retrieved by students, keep in mind that materials with names and grades need to be disposed of in a way that maintains the student's privacy. There is a large, locked box in each building for materials that need to be shredded. Ask your building secretary if you are having trouble locating this box.

***Student Privacy.*** Student privacy is protected by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). One implication of this law is that you should not leave grades, student's social security numbers, or student ID numbers on your desk in plain sight.

FERPA also means you cannot discuss the progress of any students with anyone other than the student, the student's parents, or a Simpson faculty or staff member who needs to know for academic reasons. And actually, information can only be revealed to parents if we have a document on file (and signed by the student) indicating that the student is a dependent or that the student gives us permission to communicate with his or her parents.

So what do you do if a parent calls and wants to know how his or her student is doing in your class? The short answer to that question is do not reveal private information about

the student. It might be that there are things that you can tell the parent, but you aren't likely to know that off the top of your head; you'll need to call the Registrar's Office to find out. Let the parent know that, due to FERPA, you cannot answer their questions until you have verified that the College has that signed document on file. Request the parent's phone number and then check with the Registrar to find out whether you can provide that parent with information or not.

Telling a parent that you cannot talk to him or her and hanging up the phone, however, is not particularly effective. Instead, ask the parent if he or she has spoken with the student. Encourage the parent to discuss his or her concerns directly with the student rather than behind the student's back. The other thing to do is listen. Parents call because they are worried. Offer a friendly ear and the reassurance that you care about their student too. It's amazing how helpful you can be without revealing any privacy protected information about the student.

## Obtaining Information on Room Assignments and Class Rosters

*StormFront* is the best place to start to find out information about your classroom and your students. You can use StormFront to determine the building name and room number, your course roster, and even contact and advisor information for each student.

- Log onto the StormFront portal (<https://stormfront.simpson.edu>)
- Click on My StormFront and then on Faculty Information
- Click on Class Roster
- Select the current term and click Submit. You'll see a list of the courses you are scheduled to teach along with the building name and room number.
- To see the list of students (along with their e-mail address), select one of the courses and click Submit
- To learn more about one of your students, check the box in the "student profile" column and click Submit. You'll be taken to a page of information including the student's phone number, major, and advisor's name.

Once you know where you are scheduled to teach, you can learn about the media equipment available in the room (e.g., DVD/VCR players, projectors, internet connections, etc.) by visiting <http://www.simpson.edu/library/about/medialoc.html> (or got to the faculty development page, click on Using Technology, and then click on Media Equipment). This page is organized first by building and then by room. It provides information about the capacity of the room, and, if you click on the room number, you can see a photograph of the room. Some buildings have equipment that can be checked out from the main office. For example, Carver Hall and Wallace Hall each have a computer cart with 15 or more laptops that you can reserve for classroom use. If you need something that is not already available in the classroom or the building, contact Media Services at least two days in advance, and, assuming it is available, they will deliver the equipment you need.



# Developing as a Teacher/Scholar

---

## Teaching, Advising, Scholarship, and Service

The college has some official language in the Faculty Handbook on what each of these four areas of faculty responsibility mean, and the importance of each in one's work at Simpson, and it's helpful to look at this from time to time. Here are a few more thoughts about what these four areas of faculty work--common to almost every type of institution of higher education--mean at Simpson.

At Simpson teaching is at the center of what we do. This is what we're here for--to help students learn, to guide them to key ideas and methods, to encourage, prod, provoke and correct as they gain understanding, critical judgment, and ultimately engage in original thinking in our fields. We each are grounded in the particular discipline and subject area of our training, and our own teaching is centered there. But part of our mission is to see that students are educated "liberally," across the disciplines and mindful of interconnections between fields. And one of the pleasures of a college like Simpson is that we have opportunities to extend our own learning and teaching as well.

There is no one model of excellent teaching. The great lecturer is alive and well at Simpson--as is the workshop leader, the facilitator of discussions, the co-learner. The main thing is to think about the kind of teaching we're doing, to reflect on methods and subject matter taught, to experiment, and evaluate. Part of the process for contract renewal, tenure, or promotion involves us writing about our teaching--our goals, our methods, and how we may have changed these over time.

Advising is an important part of a faculty member's responsibilities at Simpson. Our high priority on teaching is closely connected to this emphasis on advising. Advising responsibilities are conceived more broadly than just working with those students assigned to be one's advisees; a great deal of advising happens in day-to-day contact with students. Although not all institutions include advising within the responsibilities of the faculty, at Simpson, we consider advising so important that we have an advising mission statement:

Academic advising at Simpson is a true collaborative process, in which success is equally dependent upon the efforts of the student and the advisor. The academic advisor works together with other college faculty and staff to provide guidance, clarification and encouragement to empower the student to take responsibility for completing an academic program and preparing for the future in accordance with the college mission statement.

## Objectives:

1. To assist the student in preparation and timely completion of an academic program congruous with the desires, passions, skills and strengths of the student
2. To be a resource for information about the college, its programs, and extended educational opportunities outside the classroom
3. To be a resource for assisting student to resolve their own issues related to the students' ongoing experience at Simpson College
4. To help students discover that a successful academic program at Simpson includes experiences beyond the classroom
5. To encourage appreciation for and understanding of the Liberal Arts

Engagement in professional development and scholarship or creative/artistic work is also crucial to one's development as a faculty member. Effective, exciting teaching depends on us being current in our fields and in making active contributions to them. We're not expected to produce the *quantity* of scholarship/artistic work that is often expected at a major university (though some do). But active involvement in one's field is important. At Simpson, evidence of professional development, scholarship and achievement may be demonstrated in four categories: ongoing professional development such as attendance at discipline-based or faculty development conferences; ongoing involvement in research and scholarly study (including the scholarship of teaching and learning) such as publishing and presenting at conferences; creative and artistic works such as paintings, performances, scripts, and poetry; and service to professional organizations within the discipline such as serving on boards or as a journal editor.

Finally, the college depends on us to participate in institutional service for its governance and well-being. Our educational mission generates lots of supporting tasks that need to be done--both for the maintenance and for the creative changing of the institution. The small size of our faculty insures that we're called on a lot. But the small size of the institution also means that it is easy for one individual to have an impact, which can be enormously gratifying.

There's not just one way to combine and balance activities in the four areas of teaching, advising, professional development, and service. Teaching is always at the center, but there may be some years one does major changes in the subjects and/or methods of teaching and other years when one is in more of a "steady state." There may be similar variations in the areas of advising, professional development, and service. A sure route to burn out is to introduce three totally new courses, launch a large new research project, and chair a major committee with a big change agenda all in one year! How the areas get balanced out may differ from faculty member to faculty member, or at different points in a single faculty member's career. The challenge is to find a balance at any given point that is personally satisfying, is serving well the students who are the reason for us being here, and can be done while still staying sane.

## Advising

Most faculty members begin formal advising responsibilities their second year at Simpson. An advising training workshop will be offered at the beginning of Spring semester to help you prepare to become an advisor. In addition, you will have the opportunity to be paired with an advising mentor and to participate in a real advising appointment to learn the ins and outs of advising appointments and course registration mechanics. We expect that the people with tenure-track and multi-year appointments will attend this workshop, but people with one-year contracts are also invited to attend if wish to do so. In the meantime, here's an overview of what to expect.

### *Acquiring Advisees*

Advisees are acquired in three different ways: agreeing to a request from a student majoring in your department, being assigned a transfer student who is majoring in your department, or teaching a Liberal Arts Seminar (LAS). LAS courses are enhanced versions of existing courses (e.g., students can take Psyc 101 or Psyc 101 as an LAS) and are designed to help first year students make a successful transition from high school to Simpson College. The LAS instructor serves as the academic advisor for the 18 students in the class. Although some LAS students may decide to major in that department, most will declare a major sometime in their sophomore year and will then ask someone else to serve as his or her advisor.

### *What to Discuss During an Advising Appointment*

Different faculty members have different philosophical approaches to advising, just like they have different philosophical approaches to teaching. Some faculty members take a developmental approach in which they work with the student to identify and overcome the student's weaknesses. Other faculty members utilize an appreciative advising approach in which they focus on identifying and building on the student's strengths.

All of our advisees have to see us twice a year to register for the next term's courses. Although course registration is the most obvious goal of advising sessions, it is not the most important. Good advising is about asking good questions and really listening to the answers. When a student comes to see you for an advising appointment, try beginning with an open-ended question about how the term is going. Resist answers that just come back with what grades the student is earning. Let them know that grades are not the only (or even the main) thing on your mind. Which course are they finding the most interesting? Why? What course are they finding frustrating, and why? What kinds of things are they doing outside the classroom? Are they finding friends? How are things back home? One goal is for us to learn about these students, whom we see less frequently but sometimes with more potential for a close relationship or impact than students in our classes. Another goal of such questions is to let the students know that we are interested in learning about who they are and what they care about, and to try to help them define and then achieve long-term goals, beyond the courses to be selected for the next term.

Some things you might ask about: what they especially enjoy studying; what extracurricular activities they are pursuing; how they feel about (or would assess their skills in) reading, writing, mathematics, foreign language; what off-campus programs might interest them; a few adjectives they would use to describe themselves; what matters most to them in life right now; anything else they think it might be helpful for you to know about (e.g., stresses at home, homesick, ongoing personal problems)?

We want them to have thought about what courses they want to take for the next term, but we also want them to be open to talking about a variety of possibilities. When it's time to get down to the business of signing up, try asking: What are you thinking about for next term? Why these courses? What else did you think about? Help them see the possible ways in which these courses may (or may not) work well together--and not just in the sense of balancing the quantity or type of work load (though that's important too). What intellectual connections might there be between these courses, or between this course now and something they've already taken, or are thinking of taking? What longer term goals might these courses contribute to? What new paths might be tried out?

A big part of advising students, particularly first and second year students, is to encourage the broadening of horizons--the consideration of a range of possibilities that might never have occurred to the student. Be sure to have them read over the section of the catalog on off-campus programs, for example, and then to consider course scheduling in light of which programs might be of possible appeal. Encourage them to try out disciplines new to them, but that seem connected to interests they have. Encourage them to try again things they didn't like or do well in during high school, but that are conceived of or taught quite differently at the college level.

Sure, keep the graduation requirements in mind as things that need to be fulfilled. The challenge is to keep these requirements from becoming a mundane kind of checklist, and instead to encourage an attitude of discovering bridges from one course or requirement to another, of discovering the possible interconnections between one field and another, and between these courses, students' larger academic goals, their personal goals, and their hopes for their lives after college. It may help to see ourselves less as an authority ("My advisor will know what I should do") than as the person responsible for starting a conversation, to get students to ask questions themselves: Where will this course lead? What connections can I make from here to there? What will the consequences of this path be?

### *Advising Majors*

Since major advisees come to us because of a specific choice of field, there can be a feeling that your primary task is to see that the student has successfully completed the requirements of the major and has thought a bit about what to "do with" this major after college). We suggest that you think about "success" in completing the major more broadly, with much of our task again being to encourage students to see the interconnectedness of this major with other fields. For example, to suggest to a student interested in language and metaphor that their understanding would be much enhanced by

taking a field biology course where they will be immersed in the natural environment and another sort of language of describing and explaining. Or that a student will be a better physicist if they have further pursued their questions about the nature of the universe in a course on epistemology.

While the second year of advising non-majors is often taken up with the question "But what will I major in?", a dominant question for many of our major advisees is "But what will I do with this major?" Given that virtually all of us have come to where we are by going to college, majoring in the field we are now teaching, going to grad school in that field, and then becoming professors, it is difficult not to see this path as the "golden" one. It's difficult not to be especially excited by those very talented students who are coming to choose the same path we have walked ourselves. And it may be the only path we feel comfortable giving advice about, as it may be the only path we know from direct experience. But this is a real disservice to the many students in our fields (the strong majority in most of our departments) whose end goal is not being a clone of ourselves. Graduate school is one option, but only one. We should be sure all students know about the help available at the Career Center. But it's also important for us to find out as much as we can about the variety of career and life paths pursued by majors in our fields. Professional associations often have helpful material about this. Take the time to find out what our own majors have been doing some years out. (Ask your department chair for some examples.) Students sometimes think that the choice of a major seals their fate to a very limited set of life paths. But English majors can go to medical school and studio art majors can become bankers. Indeed, they sometimes do, and we can help our advisees see that what matters are the skills they acquire as much or more than the particular major they complete.

Students (often under pressure from their parents) spend much of their last two years in college thinking, "What will this major get me?" We should also encourage our students to ask the question, "What will this major prepare me to give?" Who knows, it may even encourage us to ask the same question of ourselves. . .

### *Course Selection*

The more we know about the curriculum at Simpson, the more help we can be to our students in these sessions. The catalog, the course schedule, and departmental web pages are important aids, but they are only a beginning. Phone calls are often a crucial part of an advising session. If you can't reach a particular instructor whose course the student is interested in, try another member of the department--we often know a fair amount about each others' courses. Or you may have to suggest to the student that you schedule the appointment so that either you or s/he has a chance to gather more information. (And please, check in the catalog for prerequisites, and if the student does not have those listed for a course, do not let them sign up for the course without prior permission of the instructor. The computer catches some prerequisites but not all.)

It's not entirely clear what the nature of the authority of the advisor is, but it's important to remember that the final responsibility for registration and for seeing that various

requirements are fulfilled is the student's. Students and advisors can determine which requirements have been met and which are still needed by viewing the student's degree audit via StormFront.

To view a student's degree audit

- Log onto the StormFront portal (<https://stormfront.simpson.edu>)
- Click on My StormFront and then on Faculty Information
- Click on My Advisees.
- Select the current term and click Submit.
- Select Evaluate Program from the drop-down menu next to the student's name.
- Either check the current major or select a different major from the drop-down menu.

### ***Improving as an Advisor***

A Lilly Faculty Advising Group is formed each year to provide more extensive advisor training. This program was developed for all faculty, not just new faculty, thus it provides a unique opportunity to get to know faculty from other divisions throughout the college.

You can find additional information about advising on the faculty development website. Just go to <http://www.simpson.edu/faculty> and click on Advising.

## **Faculty Development Program**

*Simpson College is “dedicated to excellence in private higher education” and to “promoting integrative learning that enabling students of all ages to develop intellectual and practical skills” (Mission Statement).*

The breadth and depth of Simpson's comprehensive faculty development program supports a range of faculty endeavors associated with excellence in private higher education. The ultimate goal of faculty development is to improve student learning. The proximate goals of faculty development include supporting traditional professional work (e.g., scholarship, conference attendance), teaching and learning, institutional development (e.g., nurturing faculty leaders), and personal development (e.g., balancing work and a personal life).

A few of the opportunities sponsored by the faculty development program are described below. These programs are available to all faculty, regardless of the type of contract they have. You can learn more about all these programs on the faculty development website at <http://www.simpson.edu/faculty>

### ***Faculty Development Day***

Get your year off to a great start with these teaching and learning sessions offered in August. Topics offered in 2007 included plagiarism, using the clickers, getting started with the portal, and “they learn what they do.” All sessions were offered by members of the faculty.

### ***Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT)***

These 20-minute faculty development sessions offer faculty one concrete, specific Great Idea for Teaching (GIFT). These brief sessions won't take long to attend and will provide you with a teaching tool you can quickly and easily implement in your own classes. Previous topics have included the minute paper, study groups, and reading quizzes. Each session is offered twice: once over breakfast and again the following day at lunch. Meals are paid for by Faculty Development.

### ***Mid-semester Evaluations with SurveyMonkey***

Want to improve your end-of-the-semester evaluations? Find out what your students think of your class now so you can make changes. We will use the items you supply to create a survey on SurveyMonkey at no charge to you or your department. Once your students have completed your survey, the results will be emailed to you. Your results are completely confidential; they will not be shared with your department chair or with FPC.

## **Teaching Evaluations**

All faculty at Simpson administer and receive results from teaching evaluations of their classes. All faculty, including tenured faculty, are evaluated for each class.

It is important to keep these evaluations in perspective. Most of us cannot help sorting through our results looking for the problems (e.g., higher than average scores in the Disagree or Strongly Disagree categories). We need to remember to look at these data in a broader perspective, examining patterns that occur over a number of classes, over a number of years, keeping in mind that to be at the faculty average at Simpson is to be a good teacher. It can be tremendously helpful to compare your evaluations with a colleague or number of colleagues. Good choices for comparison would be someone who teaches the same or a similar course, or anyone that is willing. However, you should not feel obligated to share your evaluations if someone asks to see yours. You can also initiate a conversation with your department chair, who receives a copy of your evaluations each term.

Keep in mind that these teaching evaluations are not and need not be the sole index of your teaching ability. You may want to administer your own evaluations, which may include mid-term as well as end-of-the-course evaluations and/or simply keep notes on your impression of your performance in a class. (See Appendix A for the Course Evaluation Questions used at Simpson.)

## **Research During the School Year**

Each year one Simpson faculty member wins the Distinguished Research Award. I contacted the people who won this award recently and asked them how they managed to get research done during the academic year. Most of them indicated that they get more work done during the summer than during the academic year. One person answered the question this way:

“Initially, I could not get research done during the school year, however, I was able to use this time for editing. For the past four years or so, my interests have shifted into pedagogy. This is well suited to a heavy teaching load since I am able to field-test various pedagogies very readily. Even so, the vast bulk of my writing and research takes place in the summers.”

Another offered the following:

“I have developed some projects that I can incorporate into the laboratories for the courses I teach and for students doing independent research projects. For example, the work that I am completing on my current sabbatical will continue with two research students in the fall. The benefit for bringing students into the picture is several fold:

- Students do real experiments rather than canned exercises for learning skills and techniques. As a result, they invest more into the laboratory experience.
- Almost all of the labs are connected. The work we do on one week in lab is required for the work we will do the next week in lab. Students hopefully understand how multiple techniques are required and applied to answer a single question or build a particular product (such as a piece of DNA). It doesn't make sense to me for students to learn laboratory skills without any context for how they are used in a "real" lab.
- When there are many hands involved, there is a good chance of getting some meaningful results.”

I also asked the research-award winners what advice they had for new faculty interested in getting research done. Here's what they said:

- Never, ever, agree to teach summer school.  
Never, ever, agree to teach overloads.
- Use your non-teaching periods fully and wisely. Connect your teaching and research interests as much as possible.
- Understand your limitations and use that understanding to be creative about how to get things done and to be realistic about what you can accomplish.
- Collaborate with people at other institutions.

See Appendix B for a longish piece from Knox College on this subject.

## Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion

Because this handbook is not in any way an official guide to Simpson regulations, be sure to read the Faculty Handbook for the official policy and procedures involved in reappointment, tenure and promotion. The Faculty Handbook is available online at <http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/resources/handbook.html>.

Issues of reappointment, tenure, and promotion appear in two different parts of the handbook: Part II of the Handbook describes the Personnel Policies and Part III describes the Personnel Procedures. Part II, Section 7 contains helpful information regarding the expectations for promotion; it includes details regarding the types of information you should provide to demonstrate effective teaching; advising; professional development, scholarship and achievement, and service to colleagues and the college. Part III includes sections regarding the procedures for formative review (in years 1, 2, 4, and 5), mid-probationary (third-year) review, and promotion and tenure. The review process for tenure-track faculty differs with each year of service. The make-up of the review committee even differs.

We'd like to offer four pieces of advice to help you prepare for the annual evaluation process. First, don't panic. We hope that all faculty members who come to Simpson are successful and happy here. The evaluation process is designed to help everyone become a better faculty member. The goal is not to get rid of faculty; the goal is to build a stronger faculty.

Second, invest time and energy getting to know tenured faculty members outside of your department as well as in your department. When you undergo a formative review (in years 1, 2, 4, and 5), you'll be asked to provide a list of tenured faculty members in your department that you would like to have serve on your review committee. In addition, you'll be asked to provide a list of tenured faculty members outside your department you would like to serve on your review committee. The more people you know, the easier it is to generate these lists.

Third, if you haven't been observed while teaching before, invite people you trust to observe you teach and provide you with feedback. Each time you are reviewed, members of your review committee will attend one of your courses and observe you teaching. The feedback you get from classroom observations can be invaluable.

Fourth, invest time and energy getting to know people in your area of specialization who teach at other small liberal arts colleges in the area. In the mid-probationary (third-year) review, you have the option of having an outside reviewer come to campus to provide feedback. More information about the mid-probationary review including selection of the off-campus evaluator is available in Part VII: Appendix C of the Faculty Handbook. An off-campus evaluator can provide helpful feedback that members of your department may not be able to provide, because at a small place like Simpson, you are probably the only person in your department with your particular area of expertise. Ask your department chair for advice on who to get to know.

# Participating in the Life of the College

---

One of the great things about a small college is that your contacts will not be limited to your department. But still, it can take some time to meet other people and to find the folks who seem most congenial to you. The longer you're here, the better a sense you'll have of exactly who can help you with one problem or another or with whom you'd most like to talk about some new project. Here are some of the ways to make connections. Work these networks!

## Forum Events

Like most educational institutions, Simpson offers a wide variety of cultural events throughout the year including nationally recognized speakers, musical concerts, dramatic productions, panel discussions, and convocations. Most events are free and open to the public. You can find a list of forum events by going to <http://www.simpson.edu/artsforum> and clicking on Forum Events.

## Athletic Events and Student Performances

Students at Simpson appreciate it when faculty members come see them in athletic events, musical performances, and Theatre Simpson performances. The students in your classes will be glad to tell you when they are scheduled to compete or perform on campus.

## Committee Work

First-year faculty are not asked to serve on any standing committees of the faculty, but during spring semester tenure-track faculty have the opportunity to volunteer (or be nominated) to serve on a committee in their second year. These are a great way to contribute to the life of the college (and to effect changes in which you are interested). They're also another good way to meet people with whom you might not otherwise cross paths. You may find kindred souls where you least expect them. Besides standing committees, there are many ad hoc groups that spring up in the course of the year to work on one project or another. Don't feel obliged to say "yes" to everything you're asked to join, but do look out for those where you have a strong interest in contributing.

The faculty committees tend to be referred to by their acronym rather than by their full name. Whether you have a tenure-track appointment or a visiting appointment, knowing what these acronyms mean makes life a little easier. The three major committees are BCC, EPCC, and FPC.

***Budget and Coordinating Committee (BCC)*** makes recommendations to the administration regarding a variety of budgetary and financial issues such as faculty salaries and benefits. For example, BCC provides recommendations regarding which health insurance company the college should use if we need to change companies. In

addition, at some point during your first year, you are likely to hear the chair of BCC give a report during a faculty meeting regarding how faculty salaries at Simpson compare to those of a set of comparison schools in Iowa.

Six faculty members serve on BCC each year. Some are elected to one-year terms and others to two-year terms. Faculty are elected to BCC by rank (2 each from the ranks of full, associate, and assistant and instructor), not by division.

***Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee*** (EPCC) makes recommendations to the faculty concerning changes to the curriculum. Anyone who wants to add or drop a course from the catalog, add or change a major or minor, or add or change some other program, must submit a proposal to EPCC. Proposal forms are available online at <http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/committees/epcc>. EPCC carefully evaluates the proposals and often asks the proposer to make changes to clarify issues or address concerns. Once EPCC has approved a proposal, it is sent to the full faculty for their approval.

Ten faculty members serve on EPCC each year. Faculty are elected to EPCC for two year terms by division. At least one divisional representative on EPCC must be tenured.

***Faculty Personnel Committee*** (FPC) makes recommendations to the dean and president regarding matters of reappointment, promotion, tenure, sabbatical, and leaves of absence. Five tenured faculty members serve on FPC, at least 3 of whom must hold the rank of full professor (the other two must be associate professors).

***Other Committees.*** A list of all the faculty committees is available at <http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/committees/index.html>.

## **Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings at Simpson are different than those at many other institutions. We do not have a faculty senate that makes decisions on behalf of the faculty; the entire faculty meets once a month to make decisions on their own behalf; every faculty member gets to vote on proposals. Visiting faculty members (i.e., people with one-year appointments) are not permitted to vote, but they are allowed – and encouraged – to attend faculty meetings. Faculty meetings are a good way for everyone to find out what’s happening in the life of the college. The meetings are usually held the first Tuesday of each month at 12:30 in Camp Lounge (located above The Grill in Brenton Student Center). Traditionally, Habitat for Humanity offers an inexpensive lunch outside Camp Lounge beginning at noon for the regular 12:30 meetings. Your support of these students is greatly appreciated!

***Preparing for Faculty Meetings.*** Several days before the faculty meeting, you’ll receive the minutes of the previous meeting and an agenda. Take a moment to read through the minutes and any items on the 28-day wait. Most often the items on the 28-day wait are

proposals from the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC) regarding the addition or deletion of courses in the catalog.

**Agenda.** The basic structure of the agenda for the faculty meetings is laid out in the faculty bylaws. After approving the minutes, the president gives a report. Sometimes the president will ask one of the vice presidents to update the faculty on some issue of relevance to the life of the college (e.g., where we stand with recruitment targets, how fundraising efforts are going, etc.). Following the president's report, the academic dean will address the faculty. The dean's report often includes reminders of upcoming events and things faculty need to do (e.g., turn in book adoption forms). The meeting continues with items requiring the 28-day wait (see below), unfinished business, new business, reports and announcements.

**Voting.** Faculty meetings are run according to Roberts Rules of Order. That means that virtually all the business conducted by the regular faculty is moved, seconded, and approved or rejected by voice vote. For example, after calling the meeting to order, the dean will ask for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Someone usually calls out "so moved" (although they might also say something like "I move we approve the minutes"); someone else says "second." Once the motion has been moved and seconded, the dean will say "All in favor of approving the minutes, say aye;" faculty who are eligible to vote and who wish to approve the minutes respond "aye." The dean then asks for responses from people opposed to the proposal.

**The 28-Day Wait.** Most decisions made by faculty are not made during the same meeting in which they are first introduced. Instead, items of business are first put on the 28-day wait – usually by the chair of a committee. For example, after EPCC has approved a proposal to add a new course to the curriculum, the chair of EPCC will put the proposal on the 28-day wait and the text of the proposal is made available to the faculty (sometimes in print, but usually via e-mail or on the web). The faculty won't vote on the proposal until the following faculty meeting. This provides everyone with the opportunity to think about the proposal, discuss it with others, and have any questions about it answered by the proposer.

**Reports and Announcements.** After the business of the faculty has been completed, the dean will ask for reports from the officers of the college (e.g., the registrar and director of faculty development) and from officers of the faculty (e.g., chairs of faculty committees often provide reports regarding the work of their committees). After these reports, the dean asks if anyone has announcements to share. People will use this time to remind others of upcoming forum events, committee meetings, and departmental events.

## Get to Know Other Faculty

In addition to the public things you do on campus, be sure to invest time in developing a network of colleagues that can help you grow as a teacher, advisor, and faculty member. According to an article in the December 2008 issue of *The Teaching Professor*, everyone should have a support network of teaching colleagues including a departmental colleague,

a colleague from another department, a good teacher, a teacher from elsewhere who shares a pedagogical interest, and a teacher you can teach.

Everyone at Simpson should have trusted colleagues in other departments, in other divisions, and in other buildings on campus. Colleagues who are just a year or two more experienced than you can serve as great peer mentors; they know what your questions are because they were seeking answers to those same questions recently. Make sure you also develop strong working relationships with tenured faculty members in other departments and divisions as well. Tenure-track faculty members undergo a formal review process each year. The faculty member under review provides a list of tenured faculty members outside his or her department who could serve on the review committee. The more people you know outside your department, the easier time you'll have providing that list.

As part of the mid-probationary review (which is usually conducted in the third year), tenure-track faculty members have the option of having an outside reviewer come to campus to provide feedback about their teaching. Thus, you should work on getting to know faculty at other institutions in the Midwest as well as getting to know Simpson faculty. Ask your department chair to help you identify people in the area who teach in your area of expertise.

# Managing Time and Stress

---

## Office Hours

If there are ninety members of the faculty at Simpson, there are ninety approaches to how to schedule and conduct office hours. Some faculty appear to live in their offices and others are only available during set office hours. Setting boundaries is up to you and there isn't a competition.

*In the office* Fixed office hours provide you and the students a specified time when you are available without them having to ask for time and without you having to completely disrupt your schedule every time they need you. It's a time students can depend on finding your door open and their needs your first priority. (Some faculty keep their door closed at other times, while others keep the door open whenever they're in the office. It's up to you, and how well you work with interruptions). Post your hours on your office door and include them on your syllabi. You might also want to have a message board or pad of paper handy to your door, so students can leave you notes and request appointments should they not find you in.

Simpson faculty members are expected to have a total of **six hours of office hours per week**. It's helpful if your office hours have some variation in the period scheduled, as students will inevitably have conflicts. Some faculty who anticipate a steady stream of students asking for help schedule more time. A sign-up sheet on the door may help if you expect to have more than a couple of students coming by, and is especially helpful during the two weeks in the middle of the term when advisees come in for pre-registration for the next term. When students ask to see you, suggest they drop by your office hours before giving them an appointment for a different time.

Try to keep distractions to a minimum when in conference with a student. You might let voice mail answer calls (you can easily set up your phone to have all calls forwarded without a ring) or quickly arrange to call back.

To set your phone to automatically forwarded calls to voicemail,

- Press the button next to your extension to get a dial tone.
- Press the button labeled “Forwd” (you’ll hear a stutter dial tone)
- Dial 5555 (the button next to your extension will flash on and off)
- To stop forwarding your calls, press “Forwd” again

For additional tips on using your phone and voicemail, go to <http://10.2.6.5/phoneguidelive/phoneguide.aspx>. Please note that this site can only be accessed from on campus.

Students will seek you out for a multitude of reasons. They may want advice on academics, scheduling, career planning, and sometimes they need life advice. Faculty do a fair amount of counseling and you need to be sensitive to when you are dealing with an average issue of young adulthood and when you may need to suggest or recommend professional help. You may also find it useful to discuss a student with colleagues who have taught the same student. The student's advisor can also be a resource. (You can find out who this is from StormFront or by calling the Registrar's office.) See section on "Student Problems" for a more detailed discussion.

Using StormFront to identify a student's advisor.

- Log in to the portal, click My StormFront (located in the My Links area), and then click Faculty Information.
- Click Class Roster, select the current term, and then click Submit.
- Select the appropriate class and click Submit.
- Check the Student Profile box to the right of the student's name and click Submit.

*Calls at home* Let students know what your policy is on being called at home. For some faculty it's "only in a dire emergency"; for others it's "any time except between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m."

## How to Say No

(You know, it's nice to work in a place where it's more of a problem to get people to say "no" than to say "yes"!)

Some ways to say no:

- "I'm afraid I'm not the best person to help you with this. Have you thought about asking\_\_\_\_\_?"
- "I'd love to help, but I really don't have time for a formal commitment. Maybe we could just talk once or twice."
- "I'm sorry, but I've just got too many other commitments right now."
- "That sounds interesting, but can I call you back tomorrow? I need a little time to think about it before I decide."

(Also see the paragraph *Say No* in the Introduction.)

## Getting Help from Support Staff

The duties of support staff are, for the most part, assigned by academic building. Faculty in the sciences can also call on several people who support work in the labs and who help take care of equipment. Part of managing our own time involves making full and efficient use of the people whose job it is to help us out in support of the educational mission of

the college. Most of us come to a new teaching job without much experience in asking for help from secretaries and other support staff; it's one more thing to learn how to do. Ask people in your department, and others in your building, for ideas on the kinds of tasks that can be delegated. Ask the secretaries and lab techs themselves. Don't be shy about asking if a particular job is appropriate or feasible to the talents and time available of the person. But do be thoughtful and considerate when requesting work to be done. Give explicit, written instructions, including an indication of the day and time by which you need the job done. If it's a rush job, ask first if the person can fit it into their schedule, and if they can't, do it yourself. (So it's to your benefit to think ahead!)

## Schedule Time for Yourself

Between teaching, meetings, student appointments, phone calls, e-mail, and class preparation, faculty members are very busy. Schedule time for yourself in your calendar so that time looks busy and you don't give it away to something else. Schedule time to eat lunch. Schedule time for physical exercise; exercise reduces stress and improves both mental and physical health.

To schedule a recurring appointment in Outlook

- From the Calendar in Outlook, create a new appointment
- Click the button labeled "Recurrence" and select how often and when you'd like the appointment to be repeated
- Be sure to set an ending date (located toward the bottom of the dialogue box). The end of the semester is often a logical time for repeating appointments to end.

## Handling E-Mail

Ailamaki and Gehrke (2003) offer three excellent pieces of advice to prevent e-mail from ruining your schedule:

First, "turn off the sound/popup "you've got mail" notification. Do it NOW" (p. 104).

To turn off E-mail Alerts in Outlook 2007, do the following.

- Select Options from the Tools menu
- Click the "E-mail Options..." button (from the page with the Preferences tab)
- Click the "Advanced E-mail Options..." button
- Uncheck the options under "When new items arrive in my Inbox"
- Click OK on each dialogue box.

Second, read e-mail only twice a day: once at the beginning of the day and once at the end.

Third, "keep your inbox empty at all times" (p. 104). When you receive an e-mail, respond to it or transform it into an item on your to do list. Then transfer it into the

appropriate message folder. “If you do not have time to answer or organized a message, you should not be reading e-mail in the first place!”

Moving Messages to Folders: Right click on the message, select Move to Folder... then select the appropriate folder or create a new one.

One last piece of advice regarding e-mail: train your computer to recognize e-mail messages that you consider to be spam. Much of the spam that’s sent to Simpson e-mail addresses is caught by the college-wide spam filter, but you can also personalize this service by marking messages as spam or not spam. For more details and instructions on how to use the spam filter, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/is/accounts/spamfilter.html>.

## **Backing Up Files**

Few things are as stressful as losing all of your files. If something catastrophic happens to your computer, you don’t want to be without your lecture notes, powerpoint presentations, or other files while Information Services is fixing or replacing your computer. Simpson provides you with 2GB of storage space on the College’s network. The network is backed up to tape every evening. The way to save files to this space is different for Windows and Macintosh users. Visit <http://www.simpson.edu/is/faculty/backup.html> for the details on how to backup your files given your particular computer.

## **Assistance Center**

Today, many of us find ourselves stretched between the demands of career, home life and other activities. These and other influences can contribute to personal problems which have a profound impact on all aspects of our lives.

At the Assistance Center, you have the opportunity to discuss your concerns in a relaxed and confidential atmosphere. A professionally trained counselor will help guide you toward a better understanding of your problem, what caused it, and approaches to a solution.

Six visits are provided free of charge to all employees who are benefit eligible and their dependents. The Assistance Center is located at 1301 Penn Avenue, Suite 305, Des Moines. To make an appointment, call during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 515-263-4004 or 1-800-732-4490.

## **Simpson’s Chaplain**

The chaplain offers pastoral counseling to all members of the Simpson community, not just to the students. You can learn more about the chaplain at <http://www.simpson.edu/religiouslife/chaplain>. If you would like to speak to the chaplain, call the chapel office at x1610.

# Student Problems

---

## Dealing with Student Problems

Inevitably, faculty will encounter a myriad of student difficulties. These issues run the gamut from late assignments to serious personal problems. All of us struggle with finding the balance between being available and willing to deal with student problems, being ready to make exceptions to deal with an individual circumstance (both of these key distinctions between a school like Simpson and a big school where students are just "numbers") and giving students the autonomy and responsibility they need to develop into adults. Often the most important help we can give is to figure out enough about the source of a problem to be able to direct the student to the appropriate source of help--and to encourage them in the habit of asking for help when they need it. We should give that help ourselves whenever we can, but should also recognize the serious problems, whether personal or academic, that should be routed through the appropriate personnel and resources.

If a student needs help that you don't feel comfortable or qualified to provide, you should feel free to refer that student to someone or someplace else. However, referring students elsewhere needs to be done with great sensitivity so that the student understands your continuing concern for him or her. In addition, forethought is needed to increase the chances that the student actually follows through on your referral. One option is to walk the student to the office to which you are referring that student. Another option is to introduce the student to the resource over the phone. With the student in your office, call the office to which you are referring the student. After explaining that one of your advisees would like to schedule an appointment, you can hand the phone to the student to work out the details.

The section on "[Resources](#)" lists some people to turn to.

## Resources

**Tradition of Learning and Caring (TLC)** is a set of retention programs designed to identify and assist students who are struggling academically and personally so that they can succeed at Simpson College. The TLC group is a committee on campus dedicated to helping students have a successful academic year. It consists of members from Counseling & Career Services, Religious Life, Registrar's Office, Hawley Learning Center, Student Development, the Associate Academic Dean, and the Dean of Students.

If you are worried about a student for any reason (e.g., the student is regularly missing class, is having a personal problem, has an eating disorder, is depressed, etc), contact the Associate Dean of Students, a member of the TLC group, or submit your concerns online using the Adequate Warning And Referral (AWAR) Form which is located at <http://www.simpson.edu/ccs/faculty/awar.html>. You can also find links the form on the faculty development website

(<http://www.simpson.edu/faculty>). The associate dean works with and through the TLC committee to obtain information on the student and to plan a course of interaction/intervention (if appropriate).

***Multicultural and International Student Affairs*** provides support for U.S. students of color as well as international students. Staff members in this office can be helpful for any problems with cultural, personal or academic adjustment that you think may affect a student. The office also develops programming to promote diversity and is a resource for issues involving race and ethnicity. It can be a valuable resource for advice about situations where cultural tensions or misunderstandings on the part of the student or the professor may be causing problems in the classroom. You can learn more about this office at <http://www.simpson.edu/mia>.

***Counseling Services*** is a key resource for students experiencing personal difficulties. The office is staffed by two college counselors and is located on the ground floor of Brenton Student Center (BSC). Short-term counseling is provided here; for ongoing therapy, students are usually referred to counseling services off campus. Appointments can be made by dropping by BSC or by calling x1556.

Some students may sense a stigma attached to seeking psychological help, or may hesitate to admit that they might need such help. They may come to you with problems that you believe would be helped through counseling. Offer whatever encouragement you can. Many of us have found that relating our own counseling experiences defuses a negative reaction. Or try: "If you've got a medical problem, you wouldn't hesitate to see a person professionally trained to deal with it. If you've got an emotional problem, why not see someone professionally trained to deal with it?"

Students with adjustment problems including homesickness and stress can also be encouraged to meet with one of the two chaplains on campus. Both chaplains have offices in Smith Chapel. You can learn more about the two chaplains at <http://www.simpson.edu/religiouslife/chaplain>.

***Other faculty.*** As we are a small community, it is often easy to find other faculty members who have had the student in question. You can find a student's advisor and class schedule via the registrar. Talking with other faculty can help you determine if the problem you're encountering is perennial or unusual, part of a long-standing pattern or a developing crisis. And they might be able to help you figure out how to handle the situation--even if it's just confirming that this is one for which you should contact TLC.

***The Hawley Academic Resource Center,*** located on the top floor of the library, provides free academic support services to all Simpson students. Hawley offers students help with study skills, peer tutoring, and writing assistance. Check out their website (<http://www.simpson.edu/hawley>) for more details and for the tutoring schedule. Most courses already have peer tutors who have set hours in which they are available in Hawley to answer questions for anyone in class. If a student wants a tutor for a class not on the list, they can stop by the Hawley Center to make arrangements for assistance.

The staff at Hawley also works with faculty to provide appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities. They can provide a quiet, proctored place for students who need extra time on exams due to a disability.

***Student Support Services*** is a federally funded program to promote learning, personal development, and retention of college students who are traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education because of income, family education background, or disability. Students need to apply to participate in this program. In order to be eligible, a student must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and meet at least one of the following criteria: first generation college student (neither parent graduated with a 4-year degree), have a limited income (probably in receipt of a Pell Grant), and/or have a documented disability. More information about the program and the application materials are available at <http://www.simpson.edu/support>.

## Sample Problems

***Unexcused absences from class:*** This is often the most obvious sign of a problem brewing or in full flower (sorry for the mixed metaphor). When the absence seems excessive, and particularly when it includes work not turned in, you may want to send the student a note to let them know you've noticed their absence, to remind them of your attendance policy, and to ask if anything is wrong. If you are reluctant to contact the student yourself, or if your own contact has had no result, you should submit an AWAARs form online to alert TLC of the problem.

What constitutes an "excused" or "unexcused" absence? Intercollegiate athletic contests and field trips for another class are examples of "college sponsored events." College sponsored events need to be treated as excused absences. These students should notify you in advance and arrange to hand in work or make-up work, or take any quiz or test scheduled for that day. Illness is reason for absence also, but how ill? That's for you to judge. You can ask students to get a written note from the nurse in the Dean of Students Office. Ask a few other faculty members what they do, and what their attendance policy is. (Some require attendance at every class, some have a set number of allowable unexcused absences, and others have no policy at all.) Decide on your own policy, put it in your syllabus, and remind students of it into the term. Then hold to it.

***Late or missing work:*** Again, you set the policy for accepting or not accepting late work. Should you remind a student of the deadline past when work hasn't come in? Many of us do, but also worry that we may be "coddling" the students by always giving them reminders. No one way to handle this either. If the student seems to have a persistent problem of handing in work late, you may want to consult with others who may know the student's habits.

***Requests for extensions or make-up work:*** None of us have a problem giving an extension or arranging a make-up exam for a student with an obviously legitimate excuse. But sometimes the excuse seems tenuous, or is requested only after the fact of a missed deadline. We don't know any faculty member who hasn't struggled with this, nor have we

heard of anyone who has come up with a fully satisfactory way of assessing the range of excuses.

***Emotional problems:*** You may notice a student is unusually quiet, listless, tired, or labile. There is never any harm in asking someone if s/he is okay or if they'd like to talk. Rather than trying to solve the student's problem yourself, though, especially if it's serious, you may provide the most help by referring the student to others (see section on Counseling Services). Of course, not all problems are traumatic and sometimes students just need a pep talk and an indication that someone cares about their personal welfare. This is pretty easy to achieve and can make you feel like a hero as well as turn around a student's day.

***Illness:*** Students sometimes don't get medical help when they need it. They don't have their mom or dad around to see to it that they go to the doctor, and they may not have anyone to take care of them if they're confined to their room. They may even be too worried about missing class work to take the time to go for an appointment or to stay in bed when they need to. This doesn't mean you should try to provide a parental substitute. But if you notice a student seems ill yet is still trudging to class, you might ask if they've been to see a doctor or at least one of the nurses on campus.

***Slipping grades:*** The thing here is to find out *why* grades are slipping. Call the student in for a talk.

***Special learning or physical needs:*** Some students have obvious special needs that you will be asked to accommodate. Others have special needs that are not so obvious. Some faculty ask students to fill in an index card with the usual vitals as well as any confidential information the student thinks would be helpful to the faculty member with regards to the student's learning style. For instance, a student might indicate that shyness is a potential impediment to participation and that some advance notice of being called on helps to organize thoughts and emotionally prepare. Sometimes a course will deal with issues that are especially sensitive to a student (e.g., racial prejudice, rape, religious identity). A course may have physical elements difficult for some (e.g., a walking field trip). Students with learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD) and in need of academic accommodations are usually advised by the Director of the Hawley Academic Resource Center to discuss their needs with their individual faculty members. Sometimes the Director will initiate contact with faculty in order to discuss appropriate accommodations. In those cases when you are not directly contacted by the Director of the Hawley Center, you should feel free to call or email with any questions or concerns that you may have. To learn more about accommodation procedures, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/hawley/dr/procedures.html>.

***First-Year Deer-Caught-in-The-Headlights Look:*** First-year students have unique needs in adjusting to college life. For many, this is their first time away from home and parental authority. For nearly all, the adjustment to independence and self-reliance is uneven. Some students will find the work load and academic standards daunting. (This can also be true of transfer students.) Others will find the freedom overwhelming. Some

will find that they are as yet unskilled at coping with social pressures without parental back-up. Most will experience some academic bumps and for many, social adjustments will be at the root of the academic problems. Particularly in the first term, you may want to check in periodically with first-year students in your classes (as well as with new advisees)--just to check on progress and general well being.

Some faculty (especially in Liberal Arts Seminars) structure required office visits as part of the course (and in lieu of a class or two) just to be able to get a one-on-one check-in with students' progress, academically as well as personally. Some faculty adjust teaching strategies in classes that tend to have mostly first-years. While still maintaining high standards, they may give first-years more time for projects, and provide more check points on work done outside of class. Also, first years generally need more development of critical and analytical thinking before being turned loose on a huge final paper, so variation in types of assignments and grade weighting for assignments and exams need to be assessed. One doesn't need to be a surrogate parent, but just to provide more structure, discipline and supervision than one might for more experienced students. Keep firm with deadlines and expectations, while also being friendly and supportive.

***International students*** add in stimulating ways to the diversity of the campus, while also occasionally requiring some special awareness and sensitivity from faculty. A myriad of cultural issues may have an impact on the progress of an individual student as well as on the dynamics of your class. Gender and class identities, for example, may be treated very differently in the home culture. Expectations of teacher and student roles may be quite different, as might habits of public presentation. If you're perplexed about a dynamic that has developed, you might want to consult with the Assistant Dean for Multicultural and International Affairs, or perhaps with a faculty member who has extensive experience in the other culture. Team learning and group projects can also be very helpful in a student's adjustment to a new culture.

***Hostile behavior towards you personally:*** In rare instances, faculty may find themselves the target of an angry or hostile student. Such an individual may seek you out or simply go straight to one of the Deans. In many instances, the Dean will defuse the situation and you may never even hear about it. If you perceive a student is upset, attempt to head off the crisis by asking the student to come talk. You needn't necessarily bring up a particular incident or problem, but rather, ask if things are going OK. Should a student persist in being hostile (whether or not their perspective is justified), faculty will probably want to take certain precautions, such as:

Keep a paper trail. Take notes during and following meetings with the individual. Use e-mail directed to the student to summarize and clarify meetings and keep a hard copy. Keep copies of all responses.

Make copies of the student's work with your commentary.

Advise your chair of the situation and perhaps apprise the individual that you have done so.

Leave your office door open during meetings with an individual with whom you have an ongoing contentious relationship.

Shift meetings to more public venues.

If the student has gone directly to a Dean, and the Dean asks you to speak to the student and listen to his/her position, you should not feel pressured to go against your own judgment in the case, especially where it concerns a grade. In the unlikely event that the student is instituting a grievance concerning some form of harassment, you should seek advice from the Dean of the College.

***Students Closed Out of Your Class:*** First, be real about what is a reasonable enrollment size for your class and stick to your guns. (See section on "How to say no.") Faculty have different strategies for dealing with the student who shows up swearing that s/he won't graduate without this course. Not many of us are totally consistent in every course all the time, but here are a few sample strategies:

*No Admits, no way, no how. Firm.* This faculty member sets an enrollment cap of about five over what is optimum for that particular course and relies on the usual no shows and drops to balance things out.

*One-on-One Admits Only. Firm.* This faculty member sets an optimal cap on the course and posts a waiting list, first-come-first-served. If someone drops, the first person on the list gets in. And so on. No bargaining.

*Low Cap, Willing To Bargain.* This faculty member deliberately sets a cap about five under the optimum, because this is a course kids closed out of other courses come running toward and it is required for the major. This faculty member decides who gets in by contacting advisors to assess how critical each student's graduation crisis really is.

# Finding Funding

---

Simpson offers a number of small-scale grant opportunities for faculty. Most of these opportunities are available only for tenure-track faculty; however, there are some exceptions. If you aren't sure about your eligibility for a particular grant, be sure to ask. Here's a list of the grant opportunities for the 2009-2010 academic year.

## Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grants

Purpose: To help faculty to continue to grow in their expertise by regularly contributing to the development of their discipline.

Maximum possible award: \$2,000

Applications due: Monday, January 18, 2010

Direct questions to Shelly Priebe

For more details and a copy of the application form, visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/faculty/research/>

## Diversity Grant

Purpose: To help faculty to include minority and multi-cultural perspectives into existing courses and also to support the development of new courses which include such perspectives.

Maximum possible award: \$500

Applications due: Monday, January 18, 2010

Direct questions to Shelly Priebe

For more details and a copy of the application form, visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/faculty/teaching/>

## Course Development and Enhancement Grant

Purpose: To help faculty to develop new courses and redesign existing courses.

Maximum possible award: \$500

Applications due: Monday, February 15, 2010

Direct questions to Shelly Priebe

For more details and a copy of the application form, visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/faculty/teaching/>

## May Term Enrichment Grants

Purpose: To take advantage of the special experiential opportunities available during May Term. Appropriate uses for these funds include but are not limited to guest speakers, travel by van to local museums, businesses, service agencies, and equipment to be used to increase the interactive nature of the class. May Term Enrichment Grants are not to take the place of appropriate course fees.

Maximum possible award: \$200

Applications due: Monday, March 1, 2010

Direct questions to Shelly Priebe

For more details and a copy of the application form, visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/resources/enrichmentgrants.html>

## **International Travel Course Development Grants**

Purpose: to help faculty develop new international travel courses by allowing them to visit the site of a new course in advance.

Maximum possible award: \$2,000

Applications due: Monday, March 29, 2010

Direct questions to Jay Wilkinson until July 15, 2009 and to Marzia Corni-Benson after August 1, 2009

For more details and a copy of the application form, visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/studyabroad/resources/faculty.html>

# Community Resources

---

Not many colleges can boast of having the best of both worlds. But at Simpson, we can and do have it both ways--small-town friendliness and a good mix of city life. There are a lot of great opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment, both in town and in nearby Des Moines. From local theatres and restaurants to professional sports teams and quality recreational areas, Central Iowa is a great place to be. Here are your links to a wide variety of events and attractions. For more options, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/about/local.html>.

## Indianola Links

Check out the information on the Indianola Chamber of Commerce website: <http://indianolachamber.com/communityguide>. They have information on local accommodations, attractions, churches, recreation (including golf courses, , restaurants, and shopping.

Information about Indianola Parks is available at <http://www.indianolaparks.com>. Indianola has numerous parks, an aquatic center (with 2 water slides, leaping lily pads, jumping pods, and more), a disc golf course, an off-leash dog playground, a senior center, a skate park, and bike/walking trails (including an 11 mile hard-surface trail to Carlisle).

## Places to Go, Things to Do

***Adventureland*** is an amusement park located in the northeast outskirts of the Des Moines metro area (<http://www.adventurelandpark.com>). It is open April through September and is approximately 30 minutes from Indianola.

***Blank Park Zoo***, located on the south side of Des Moines (25 minutes from Indianola), has over 100 different animal species (<http://www.blankparkzoo.com>).

***Covered Bridges of Madison County***. Madison county boasts six covered bridges on the National Register of Historic Places. You can learn about these bridges and get a map to visit them at <http://www.madisoncounty.com>. The bridges are approximately 40 minutes west of Indianola.

***Des Moines Art Center***. This museum, exhibiting primarily contemporary art, has a 5-star restaurant and a museum shop. The museum also has a branch located in downtown Des Moines. Information about both branches is available at <http://www.desmoinesartcenter.org>. Each branch is approximately 35 minutes from Indianola.

***Lake Ahquabi State Park*** has trails for hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country-skiing. You can rent a boat, canoe, kayak or paddleboat and go out on the lake. Swimming, fishing, and camping are also available. Ahquabi is located just 6 miles south of Indianola. Visit [http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/state\\_park\\_list/lake\\_ahquabi.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/state_park_list/lake_ahquabi.html) for more information.

***Living History Farms*** demonstrates what it was like to live on an Iowa farm in 1700, in 1850, and in 1900. Historical interpreters work at each farm to demonstrate what life was like in that era and to answer your questions. Information is available at <http://www.lhf.org>. The museum is located just off I35 in Urbandale (35 minutes from Indianola).

***National Balloon Museum***. Indianola used to be the home of the Balloon Federation of America's National Hot Air Balloon Championships and is currently home of the National Balloon Classic (<http://www.nationalballoonclassic.com>). You can learn about the museum at <http://www.nationalballoonmuseum.com>. The museum is located on highway 65/69 on the north side of Indianola.

***Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and Prairie Learning Center*** is working to restore the prairie and is home to a herd of bison. Visit <http://www.tallgrass.org> for more information. Located in Jasper County, this wildlife refuge is about 50 minutes from Indianola.

***Science Center of Iowa***. This museum (35 minutes away in downtown Des Moines) includes interactive exhibits about a wide variety of science topics "from the inner workings of the human body to the outer reaches of the solar system" (<http://www.sciowa.org>). The Science Center of Iowa also has a planetarium and an IMAX theater.

***State Historical Museum***. This museum houses interactive exhibits designed to teach museum goers about Iowa's history. Located 35 minutes from Indianola in downtown Des Moines. Visit <http://www.iowahistory.org/museum>.

## Restaurants

Between Indianola and the Des Moines metro area, there are myriad dining options. You'll find a list of Indianola restaurants at <http://www.indianolachamber.com>, click on member directory, then on restaurants.

To learn about restaurants in the Des Moines area, visit <http://www.desmoinesregister.com>, click on Entertainment, and then on Dining. You can read reviews by the Datebook Diner and search for specific kinds of cuisine. You'll find pizza, steakhouses, bistros, bars, sushi, Chinese, Thai, Indian, Italian, and more.

## Shopping

Visit the Indianola Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.indianolachamber.com>) for a list of retail shops in Indianola.

The Des Moines metro area has interesting shopping and dining neighborhoods such as:

<u>Shopping Area</u>	<u>Online Information</u>	<u>Time from Indianola</u>
Historic Valley Junction	<a href="http://www.valleyjunction.com">http://www.valleyjunction.com</a>	30 minutes
The Historic East Village	<a href="http://www.eastvillagedesmoines.com">http://www.eastvillagedesmoines.com</a>	35 minutes
Downtown Des Moines	<a href="http://www.downtowndesmoines.com">http://www.downtowndesmoines.com</a>	35 minutes

The Des Moines metro area also has a number of indoor malls:

<u>Shopping Area</u>	<u>Online Information</u>	<u>Time from Indianola</u>
Southridge Mall	<a href="http://www.shopsouthridgemall.com">www.shopsouthridgemall.com</a>	20 minutes
Jordan Creek Town Center	<a href="http://www.jordancreektowncenter.com">www.jordancreektowncenter.com</a>	35 minutes
Valley West Mall	<a href="http://www.valleywestmall.com">www.valleywestmall.com</a>	35 minutes
Merle Hall Mall	<a href="http://www.merlehaymall.com">www.merlehaymall.com</a>	45 minutes

## A: Course Evaluation Questions

---

During the last couple of weeks of each semester, all courses must have students complete course evaluation forms. The college provides 2 forms: a Scantron form (aka Simpson College FPC Course Perception Form) and a written evaluation sheet. The Scantron form contains space for items added by the instructor; however, if you are teaching a Cornerstone Studies course, you'll need to use many of these items to ask students CS assessment questions. The standard forms and the Cornerstone assessment items are provided below.

## SIMPSON COLLEGE FPC COURSE PERCEPTION FORM

Evaluations are to be completed in class. A student will collect the evaluation forms from the class and return them to the registrar's office. Professors will not see the evaluations until after the class grades have been submitted.



Use a #2 pencil to complete this evaluation. Please fill in the box which represents your answer.

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE \_\_\_\_\_ TERM: \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR: **20** \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I have learned and understood the material in this course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The course stimulated my interest in the subject.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The course helped me grasp the connection between this subject and other areas of study.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The assignments were an essential part of the course's goals and my learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The required readings and other instructional materials were useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The course clearly met its stated purposes and objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Instructor's explanations and presentations were clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The instructor was well prepared for class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. The instructor had a genuine interest in individual students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. The instructor was respectful toward students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The instructor challenged students to do their best.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Students were encouraged to share their ideas and knowledge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. The instructor graded fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The instructor provided useful feedback about my performance in this course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Overall, this instructor was effective in helping me to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Overall, this course was a worthwhile learning experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your instructor may add questions to those above. If so, please mark your responses in the appropriate places below.

18.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The Written Student Evaluation Sheet asks students for the following:

- What features of the course and/or instructor were most helpful?
- Please make any suggestions you feel would enhance the effectiveness of the instructor or improve the course.
- Additional comments:
- Did you have enough time to complete these evaluation forms? Yes/No
- Was the instructor for this class present in the classroom during the time you completed these forms? Yes/No

Cornerstone 1a (Western Perspective) Assessment

- I can explain the distinction between the classical and Judeo-Christian traditions.
- I can identify the elements of the classical tradition in contemporary society.
- I can identify elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition in contemporary society.

Cornerstone 1b (Western Perspective) Assessment

- I can identify the differences between modern worldview and the classical traditions.
- I can identify the differences between the modern worldview and the premodern Judeo-Christian traditions.
- I can identify the distinct features of the modern worldview.

All Cornerstone 2 (Scientific Perspective) forms are kept in the main office in Carver Hall. Contact the building secretary (x1830) for copies of the items.

Cornerstone 3 (Social Science) Assessment

- The basic assumptions of the scientific method and their relationship to the social sciences were clearly identified in this course.
- The nature of the questions that can be answered by social sciences was made apparent in this course.
- This course introduced me to the common social variables used by social science researchers.
- The methods of data collection most commonly used by social science researchers were made clear in this course.
- This course clarified how social scientists identify cause and effect relationships.
- The importance of social theory and the connection between theory and observation was clearly addressed in this course.

Cornerstone 4 (Humanities) Assessment

- This course helped me appreciate the role that language plays in the shaping of human culture.
- This course gave me a more sympathetic understanding of experiences, ideas, beliefs, and values through which people find meaning in their lives.
- This course helped me to think critically about experiences, ideas, beliefs, and values through which people find meaning in their lives.
- This course gave me a better understanding of the contributions of the humanities to the liberal arts.

#### Cornerstone 5 (Fine Arts) Assessment

- This course helped me to understand how the arts reflect issues and ideas throughout civilization.
- Through this course I was able to see that the arts are a form of communication that can reveal meaning or ideas and elicit responses from the “viewer”.
- I now have a greater understanding of the work that goes into creating works of art.
- I can see the arts (art, music, and theatre) as essential to the life of a community.
- In the future I am now more likely to attend art galleries, music concerts and theatrical productions.

#### Cornerstone 6 (Minority) Assessment

- This course has helped me to understand myself and others in ways that avoid the use of stereotypes.
- I now have an increased awareness of the causes and effects of structural inequalities and prejudice.
- I find myself talking with other students outside of class about the material covered in this course.
- This course has stimulated me to read related books and articles.
- I have been able to see connections between the material in this course and real-life situations I might face on the job, in my family, and as a citizen.
- I am now more convinced of the importance of the material in this course than when I began the course.
- This course has led me to read and listen to the news differently.
- This course has taught me to appreciate the contributions to American society made by minority group members.

CS 7 – Global Awareness May Term does not have special or added questions.

#### Cornerstone 8 (Senior Colloquium) Assessment

- Are you convinced that the topic of your SRC is “significant,” that is, worthy of study? Why or why not? If you are convinced of this, in what ways did each of the texts convince you of this?
- Were connections made between the materials studied and issues you expect to face in your life?
- Were the texts, films, and speakers drawn from a variety of Cornerstone perspectives rather than from one discipline?
- Did the course include a substantial writing project?

## **B: Getting Research Done During the School Year: Advice from Faculty at Knox College**

---

Compiled by Penny Gold, History Department, Knox College August, 1995

One of the difficult transitions from graduate school to a first job is the switch from a primary focus on research to a primary focus on teaching. There's a big change in the amount of time and energy available for research. And there's a corresponding change in the focus of casual conversation with colleagues, which is more likely to be, "What sources do you use to teach about 'X'?" or "What strategies do you use for getting reticent students to speak in class?" than "Can you help me figure out this problem in my research?" The relative silence sometimes makes one feel that maybe other people aren't getting any research done, at least not in the school year. But that's not true, as one learns from the annual publication lists, if not from direct conversations. Over the years I've garnered much wisdom from colleagues, both here and elsewhere, about how to keep one's research agenda going during the year, and recently I put out a query to Knox faculty asking for more tips. I've put these together so as to share the wealth, and to encourage conversation. If you have further suggestions, please let me know, and I'll add them to a revised document.

### **Attitude**

I try to combine high expectations with realism and forgiveness. For example, while I might aspire to continue my research throughout the whole year, I'm satisfied if I get something done in two terms out of the three. I look ahead to figure out which will be the busiest term, and let myself off for that period. Another example: If I've set aside 1:30-5:00 on a certain day for research, and I just can't get home until 3:00, I still go, and do what I can in the time that remains. Mike Schneider comments: "For someone who usually works through big bursts of activity alternating with periods of reflection and recovery (and I suspect there are many who operated this way in grad. school), I realize now I need to mesh that approach with the rhythms of the college calendar. We need to be more satisfied with modest (but still perceptible) gains when the calendar does not allow huge blocks of time."

### **Time**

The most important strategy for me has been the setting aside of blocks of time during a couple of weekdays (about 3-4 hours long) that are designated research time. If one waits to do research until there's "free time," it never happens! Some years I've taught a morning schedule and gone home two afternoons a week. Other years I've taught afternoons, and stayed home a couple of mornings. In times of real urgency, I've squeezed out three blocks a week for a while. A key thing is to make the time sacred. If a meeting is being arranged, the research time should be as "unfree" as any other previously arranged appointment. (This is hard to stick to sometimes, but it's important to try.)

## December Break

One thing I've always liked about our calendar (versus the quarter system I was on elsewhere) is the long break in December. I try to consider it like a "mini-summer," time to work full-steam on research for a few weeks. As opposed to spring break, which seems hopeless, and hence this wish from Mary Armon: "How about a longer spring break to help us keep or regain momentum on projects?"

## Place

Another key thing for me has been to find a place to do research that is separate from other school work (which otherwise calls out to me to get done) and where I am less readily disturbed. I work in a study at home. A spot in the library would also work. For artists, a separate studio. If there were no other place to do research than my office at school, I would forward all my phone calls and not answer knocks on the door. Mark Brodl suggests another strategy for managing student contact when working at the office: "I find it hard to work at my desk, but yet I don't want to close the door (unKnox-like and my office gets too warm). The problem is that students come in and park themselves and chatter on. Once they get themselves in the chair they're immobile objects. I stand as soon as they walk in. I, then, retain the power to decide whether they should sit or not."

## A Desk

Having a "research desk," devoted solely to research in progress, is very helpful. Work can be left spread out--easy to come back to, and always visible. Mark Brodl: "Maintaining a work space is definitely important. In the sciences we have our labs. I like the fact that this is dedicated space for interfacing with students. A desk dedicated to research is A MINIMUM. I would strongly urge that the Knox faculty push for work space for interfacing with students in every department. Ideally every faculty member should have their own research space to share with students. We push the idea of academia in the dorm rooms, but it doesn't seem to work in the other direction. Do students feel at home in the academic setting? Do they feel they have a place? If we want to do this undergraduate research in a big and national trend-setting way, let's work to enable undergraduate research. I think we'd all be better for it."

## Deadlines

Remember how many papers you wrote as a student? I think it was only possible because of externally enforced deadlines. I find deadlines still crucial to getting work done and off my desk. But now I have to give them to myself. Some examples:

***Propose a paper for a conference*** This is the kind of deadline I've used continually: proposing a paper on work I have not yet done (not on work completed). And somehow it has always gotten done by the time my session starts, even if sometimes the last pages were written by hand in the hotel room the night before. I try to give one paper a year, though I've occasionally done two and sometimes have done none--it depends on how

urgently I need to get a piece of work done (or how badly I want to make contact with other people; see below). I try to propose the paper for a conference where there will be other work and people I'm interested in. (Or that's in a city where I have friends I want to visit. . .) Scheduling a show or performance has the same effect on people in art, music, or theatre-- pushing one to intense preparation in anticipation of a public display of one's work.

***Apply for research funds*** Writing a grant proposal (even just the small ones for internal college funding), forces one to define a project and set goals. And if you get the money, you have to spend it before the granting period runs out. There were many years when the only thing that got me to make necessary trips to libraries out of town was the fact that I had funding for these trips from the Dean, and I didn't want to incur the ignominy of not spending it. Getting an external grant will also help build your profile in the profession, and will help you get future grants. It's a vicious circle, but the better track record you have (publications, grants), the easier it is to get more grants.

***Schedule a meeting with an editor at your discipline's annual meeting (for people working on books)*** Believe it or not, editors at major presses are eager to meet and talk to people who have books in progress. Knowing I had such a meeting scheduled one December was what pushed me to finish the last major section of my dissertation. And one of the two editors I spoke with eventually accepted my manuscript. I could go on at length with suggestions for placing a book manuscript, but I won't here. Please feel free to ask me for more information on this.

***Submit a manuscript for consideration for publication*** If it's accepted (whether by a journal or a book publisher), they'll give you the wonderful gift of a real, externally enforced deadline.

***Have a goal of how much to write in each block of research time*** When I'm writing long-term on a large project, I have a goal of writing three pages in each research block (of 3-4 hours). Occasionally I may write more, but I rarely write less. Having the concrete goal really helps me. Even if I'm in the last hour, and haven't yet lifted the pen, I find I can write three pages in that hour. And if I finish the three pages with time to spare, rather than go on, I usually give myself a treat, like reading a novel. Here's a similar tip from Mary Gregson: "I put great faith in the maxim, 'Write a little every day.' I believe that it virtually eliminates the threat of writer's block. Even a half-hour of writing keeps those neurons in shape."

## **Keep Notes On Ideas/Thoughts As They Come To You**

I got this idea from a teacher in graduate school, who interrupted our conversation briefly to scratch out a note and throw it in a drawer with other such notes--to be sorted out at a later date. When I sit down to draft an outline of a new project, I work from a pile of such "idea cards." Many of them get thrown out, but the rest can be sorted into sub-piles and shaped into an outline. (I make notes like this as I'm actively researching a project as well-- separate from notes on a specific source I'm reading, but rather an idea coming out

of it-- something I think I might want to say in the essay.) From Mike Schneider: "My best ideas rarely come when I'm staring at the computer screen, fueled by a certain anxiety that I must accomplish something. Some of the central themes of my dissertation came to me at 3:00 a.m. after a night of singing karaoke at a bachelor party. (It was a mild bachelor party.)"

## **Encourage Students To Work On Research Related To Your Own**

Linda Dybas: "When students are looking for topics for a paper or for independent research, I often suggest some aspect of my own research project. This helps keep me going on a project, but also serves as 1) a pilot study and/or 2) an update on the literature. It also motivates me to keep up with the new readings in the field." Mark Brodl on the same tactic: "I have students doing work directly related to mine. Granted this is easier in the sciences, but I think it works in any discipline. It is too easy to let the research slide. If you have students keeping you 'at the bench,' you really can't let them go unattended. In addition, though they aren't the insightful colleagues that another faculty or postdoc would be, they do get excited about the work, and maintaining a level of excitement is critical to maintaining ongoing work."

## **Network With Colleagues**

Since for many of us our research is not integrally connected on a day to day basis with what we're doing in the classroom, it is very helpful to establish a network of folks with whom one communicates about one's research. It helps keep the work "real," giving one gratification, and a sense of the work's importance. Contacts made through networking can also help in concrete ways to get one's work into a public, national arena.

***On campus*** Find a colleague or two on campus with whom you can talk about your research. It doesn't have to be someone in your field--just someone who has a genuine interest in you and your work (and you in theirs). Ask this person how their work is going. It always helps to commiserate with someone else who is "stuck" for a while, and to share excitement with someone who's just placed an article or book manuscript. And then they'll ask you back about your work. Caesar Akuetey has another suggestion: "I think that the setting up of research groups, each comprising five to ten members that could meet regularly to expose works being undertaken and receive comments (negative or positive) from the other members of the group would help goad the spirit of research."

***Off campus*** Establishing a network of colleagues in the region and around the country takes time--years--but is well worth the effort. You can begin with graduate school teachers and fellow students, but the further you branch out the better. Here are some other ways:

***Conferences*** Go to one or two conferences a year. It's helpful to be immersed in current research, even if it's just for two to three days. And you may meet people with whom you can talk about your work. I've found that the most effective way to meet people at conferences is to give a paper. If you're lucky, it will be scheduled early in the

conference. Some people may come up to talk to you afterwards. Others will start up conversations in the hall or at meals. (If they seem interesting, get their name and consider keeping in touch. Many academics carry business cards these days--an easy way to keep track of contacts. The Office of College Communications can print some up for you.) And even if none of this happens at the conference, someone who heard the paper might later ask you to join them on a panel at another conference, or to contribute a revised version of the essay for a collection of articles. Or they may ask you to come give a talk at their school.

***Ask for help*** There have been a few occasions on which I thought a certain scholar could give me particularly helpful feedback on something I was writing. In each case they were prominent people in the profession, and it would be good for me to have them familiar with my work. In two cases I had never met the person. In each case, I wrote a letter asking if they would be willing to read some work in progress. When they said yes, which they all did, I sent the work, and they all were very helpful. These contacts then paid off later. When I saw the individuals at conferences, they knew who I was and we could talk further. They knew enough of my work to talk of me to others, and to suggest me for panels, etc. And they became people I could use for letters of recommendation. I may have been very lucky, but I have heard from others as well that most scholars are generous with help to colleagues, particularly to junior colleagues just getting established. It's called "professional courtesy." And as the years have passed, I've been able to return this courtesy to others. Don't be shy! The very worst that can happen is that your inquiry won't be answered.

***Ask others to join you on a panel*** It's always easier to get a paper accepted at a conference if you propose a whole panel, rather than just your individual paper. While you're at it, extend your contacts as well. Ask a person whose work you admire (but whom you haven't met) to chair the session, give comments, or deliver a paper. Organizing a panel is more work than just proposing your own paper, but the payoff is high. Sign on to an e-mail discussion list in your field This is a great way to "meet" a wide variety of people, and the informality of e-mail seems to encourage helpfulness. I recently posted a query about a textbook to use in a particular course, and got a response back from a major person in American Jewish history whom I had been meaning to contact "cold" for a while, but had been too shy. This gave me an opening to tell him about my work.

***Consider getting active in a professional organization*** This is another great way to meet colleagues off campus, at the same time that you're making an important contribution to the profession. I particularly like the smaller scale of regional associations, but even national associations are often looking for people to help out in one form or another.

## **Keep Up With Current Literature In Your Field**

This is the hardest thing of all for me to do, but it is important for a variety of reasons. Mark Brodl: "I also find that I'm stimulated to maintain my research when I know what others are doing that is at least tangentially related. I TRY to maintain Friday afternoons

as my library reading time. I will go to scan the journals. Sometimes I actually have enough time to study some papers, but even if I just get a chance to read the abstracts and make xeroxes, I find I'm much better for the experience."

## **Keeping Other Obligations Under Control**

This advice is for people who are already heavily booked up with committee assignments, task forces, outside lectures, PTA volunteering, etc. When someone asks you to undertake an additional task, and you're inclined to say yes, answer: "Could you let me think about it for a day or two?" I've never had anyone refuse to give me the extra time, and this allows me the chance to fully consider whether or not I should take on the new obligation. Often I do, but sometimes I don't--even if it's something I'd very much like to do.

## **Work On Something You Love**

If you find yourself not interested in a current project, move on to something else. I settled for a conference paper on one subject I found myself losing interest in (instead of the article I'd planned), and an article on another (instead of a book).

## **Treat Yourself To Something Nice When You Finish A Project**

I have a lovely Laura Ashley dress from the time I gave my first paper at the annual meeting of the Association of Jewish Studies.

## **Know That Doing Research/Creative Work Is Part Of Your Job**

N.B. Here are a couple of books that are helpful on the specific subject of publishing books: Robin Derricourt, *An Author's Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (Princeton University Press, 1996); William Germano, *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books* (University of Chicago Press, 2001).

## C: Suggestions to Department Chairs for the Orientation of New Faculty

---

The hiring, nurturing, and support of both new and old faculty members is the most important task we do to insure a vibrant, exciting, quality learning experience for our students and for our colleagues and community as well. For new faculty our interaction as their department chair often sets the tone for their experience here at Simpson and in their profession as well. A good start is important for all of us. I would argue that the care and feeding of faculty is the most important task we do, more important than facilities, programs, and even curriculum. Good faculties make learning possible even when the facilities, program, equipment or curriculum are not the best.

The second thing to remember is that it is in the best interest of the department, the college and the new faculty member for that person to succeed in their first years of teaching. We, as a college, will invest upwards of \$300,000 in every new faculty member we hire before tenure is achieved. This is not to mention the costs of new programs, development of new courses, of building interest in the major, recruiting new students. We are on the side of each new faculty member to do everything in our power to help them in their own career and personal development.

All of this suggests some things that might be helpful for departmental chairs and everybody in the department. Clearly developing a relationship of trust and support should start early. For most of us this involves both formal meetings with new faculty as well as getting to know them better in informal ways as well. A formal meeting provides an opportunity to talk about nuts and bolts issues: order business cards for the new faculty member and double check that he or she has the appropriate keys, ID card with library bar code, long distance access number, and office supplies.

A formal meeting also provides an opportunity to lay out expectations clearly for new faculty so that they are not blindsided by unwritten rules and assumed protocols. These included the obvious expectations of meeting classes, syllabi, testing and evaluation of student work, etc. But there also may be non-obvious expectations for recruiting, or interactions with departmental alumni, or a departmental activity like a news letter, or research, or conference participation. Talk to your new faculty member about what May Term courses are like at Simpson in general and in your department in particular.

Informal meetings are also important: invite them to lunch, to informal gatherings, to go with you to a college sporting event, theatre or musical production. Invite them by your actions into the life of the college. Informal meetings are often more important than formal meetings for developing a relationship of trust and support.

This kind of relationship is particularly important when it comes to the first FPC evaluation. Make this an open process. The procedure for review of new faculty is changing substantially and you will need to review the process to become familiar with the changes. You'll be asked to write both a formative performance review and a summative letter of reappointment. A meeting in the fall before the evaluation takes

place to discuss the process as you see it, what you expect of the new faculty member, what you will write about and describing in detail how the process will unfold. Solicit their questions about the process as well. Decide with them, when would be the best time to visit their classes, share your evaluation with them before showing others, in other words, bring them into the process, make it a collaborative experience. It is best if the evaluation process is seen as supportive and helpful. If there are negatives that need to be mentioned share them with the new faculty member as early as possible so there are no surprises. New faculty need to learn the ethos of the department and the college and be given ways in which to participate and contribute to the activities of the department and the evaluative processes in place. The best results are when the faculty evaluation process is done in a collaborative way, always looking for a win-win situation.

New faculty brings new blood into the department. Our departments are all small enough that new faculty from the beginning will significantly affect the program, and curriculum, and even student perceptions of the department and perhaps even the discipline. The new faculty were not hired to simply carry out the current program; they are here to shape the department and contribute a new perspective. Welcome new colleagues by making sure departmental decisions are open and transparent. Help the new member to understand the realities and opportunities that have resulted from their hiring. Share the visions the department has and how they might be realized with their help. Learn from the new faculty member. Have them give a seminar on their work to introduce their interests to the majors in the department. Allow students to help welcome the new member. Help ensure that the new faculty member's experiences in the first years are positive for the department, the students, and the new faculty member.

## D: May Term Courses

---

During May Term students spend three weeks taking one course. Some students take a travel course and go abroad. Some students job shadow or complete an internship. And some students take an on-campus course.

### Selecting a Course Topic

May Term courses should have an academic focus, but they are usually topics that are more intensive than courses offered during the regular semester. Most of your May Term students will have majors outside your department, so don't assume they'll have any familiarity with your discipline.

Many May Term courses do not fill any specific graduation requirements, but many students prefer courses that do fill graduation requirements. Courses that fill Cornerstone 7, Global Awareness, are always in demand. "These classes are designed to introduce students to other countries and cultures and address issues such as ethnocentrism and cultural relativity. Through this introduction students will gain new perspectives on and appreciation for other cultural traditions. Students will also be challenged to reflect and look more deeply at their own culture and see how their culture fits within a larger world context" (College Catalog).

Be creative and think outside the box as you plan your May Term course. Amy Doling, a biology professor, teaches a course on AIDS in which students participate in an AIDS retreat which is sponsored by the AIDS project of Central Iowa. Lots of different faculty members teach courses focused on films. For example, John Epperson, a political science professor, recently taught Hollywood on the Potomac: Politics and Film in which students examined the ways in which political, politics, and government are portrayed in films and television shows. This past May, I taught Romantic Relationship Research; we read a book about students' experiences hooking up, and then we wrote a survey, collected data, and used SPSS to analyze the results. Murphy Waggoner, a math professor, has taught Symmetry, Sewing and Service; in this course, she introduces students to an area of mathematics that's very different from algebra and has students use what they've learned to create quilts for Human Services to distribute to new mothers in Warren county.

### Costs

Costs associated with May Term courses should be passed along to the students, but those costs need to be included in the original course proposal. For example, two professors in the math department taught the Mathematics of Games. They charged students \$35 each so that the professor could purchase games (e.g., Monopoly) for the students to play.

Students taking Ethical Photography had to pay a \$30.00 lab fee to cover the cost of disposable cameras and development and materials to make a Presentation display of the service projects.

Students in the History of Rock and Roll visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. They paid \$245.00 for tour bus transportation; lodging (two nights), tickets to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum; meal tickets to the Hard Rock Café: Cleveland. They were also told to take an additional \$30.00 for personal snacks, etc.

## **May Term Enrichment Grants**

The May Term Enrichment Grants are designed to help faculty to take advantage of the special experiential opportunities available during May Term. Appropriate uses for these funds include but are not limited to guest speakers, travel by van to local museums, businesses, service agencies, and equipment to be used to increase the interactive nature of the class. May Term Enrichment Grants are not to take the place of appropriate course fees. The maximum possible award is \$200 and applications are due Monday, March 1, 2010. For more details visit

<http://www.simpson.edu/academicdean/resources/enrichmentgrants.html>

## **Enhancing Enrollment**

May Term courses often have a hook to attract students. For example, one psychology professor was interested in teaching students how psychologists do behavioral observation and coding, so he taught a class on poker. Students videotaped each other playing poker and then used the behavioral observation techniques to determine whether they could detect bluffs. Very few students would have signed up for a course called “Behavioral Observation and Coding,” but there was a waiting list for the course called “Psychology of Texas Hold ‘Em Poker.”

Come up with a snazzy title for your course. Here are some of titles of courses offered during the last few May Terms: Supergirl Saves the World...Again; Jesus on the Big Screen; Comics, Religion, and Culture; The Ted Bundy Letters: An Introduction to Content Analysis; How to Think Like an Economist; Why Geeks Rule: The History of Computing. You can look at the course titles and descriptions of the May Term 2009 courses at <http://www.simpson.edu/academics/schedules/mayterm.html>.

## **Pedagogical Approaches that Work in May Term**

May Term starts immediately after Spring finals. In fact, Spring semester grades are due just after May Term starts. As you think about what you want to teach for May Term, keep in mind that both you and your students will be tired. May Term courses meet for approximately three hours per day every day for three weeks. Don’t plan a course that is going to require you to lecture every day for three hours – neither you nor your students will be happy if you do. Don’t design a May Term course that is going to leave you utterly exhausted at the end of each day.

Select a topic you can teach by incorporating learning activities into your course that take advantage of the longer class period. For example, feature-length films don't fit well into class sessions during the regular semester, but they can work very well during May Term. Field trips and invited speakers can also be used effectively in May Term courses. Here are some examples of other pedagogical approaches that could work well in May Term.

- **Service Learning.** “Service learning is a pedagogy in which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized community service. The service experience is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the student” (Modified from the Corporation for National Service). To learn more about service learning and the ways that Simpson can help you design a service learning experience for your students, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/service/faculty.html> or contact Jim Hayes, the Director of the Center for Vocation and Integrative Learning (CVIL).
- **Jigsaw Method.** 1) Divide the material to be learned into four assignments; frequently these are reading assignments, but they could be some other sort of assignment. Each student completes one of those four assignments and works with the other students who have the same assignment to become an expert on that material. 2) Rearrange students into different groups such that one person from each expert group is in each new group. Students work to teach each other the material about which they have developed expertise. 3) Have these groups complete an activity together that requires the use of all the material they've learned. For clearer and more detailed instructions and examples, visit <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/course设计/tutorial/jigsaw.html>.
- **Cooperative Learning or Other Group Assignments.** Cooperative Learning refers to a specific way of using group activities so that the group members work effectively together. You can learn more at <http://www.co-operation.org/>.

## Travel Courses

Each May, many students participate in international travel courses and a few take domestic travel courses. Travel courses need to be planned far in advance. Proposals for international travel courses for May Term 2010 had to be submitted by January 2009; proposals for domestic travel courses in May 2010 had to be submitted by February 2009.

To learn more about proposing a travel course, visit <http://www.simpson.edu/studyabroad/resources/faculty.html>.

# E: The New Curriculum

---

## The Work of the Learning Programs Working Group (LPWG)

This is an exciting time to be at Simpson as we're in the midst of making majors changes both to the academic structures and to the general education curriculum. In the fall of 2006, the President and the Academic Dean announced that they were committed to shifting faculty from an 8 course load each year to a 6 course load. To meet this goal, they agreed to add 10 new tenure-track faculty lines over the next 5 years. However, 10 lines is not enough to reduce everyone's load by two classes a year. So in addition to that, the Learning Programs Working Group (LPWG, often pronounced "lipwag"), a large committee of elected and appointed faculty members and administrators, was created to examine the academic structures and the general education curriculum.

LPWG has now brought forth two proposals for faculty consideration. The first proposal focused on changes to academic structures. In April of 2008, the faculty voted to tentatively approve changing the number of courses required for graduation from 39 plus four May Term courses to 32 plus 2 May Term courses. The additional elements of the proposal are provided below.

Once the faculty had approved the changes to the academic structure, LPWG set to work designing a new general education curriculum. The current general education curriculum, Cornerstone Studies, was too large to fit into the new academic structures. As part of the proposal regarding academic structures, the faculty agreed that approximately one third of the courses required for graduation should be general education courses, one third should be courses in the major, and one third should be electives. The Cornerstone Studies program requires students to take 13-18 courses.

LPWG considered a wide variety of different models of general education: the exposure model, the ways of knowing model, the big/enduring questions model, the great books model, an integrated/concentration model, and a problem-based model. Three models were then presented to the whole faculty for discussion: a revision of Cornerstones, a concentration model, and an interdisciplinary model. Based on the feedback from the faculty LPWG began constructing an interdisciplinary model.

The new curriculum focuses on preparing students to be engaged citizens and was approved by the faculty in April of 2009. It has four main elements:

- I. Simpson Seminar (a first-year experience course)
- II. Ourselves, Civilization, and the World (7 courses)
- III. Embedded Skills (7 skills)
- IV. Senior Capstone in the Major

We are currently in the process of writing the criteria that courses would need to fill to receive each designation. For example, students need to have four experiences learning Written Communication (WC) while at Simpson. In order for a course to receive a WC designation, it would need to meet a set of specific criteria, not just be offered by the

English department. Although some of the courses and skills are more likely to be taught in one department than others, all of them could be taught in a wide variety of different departments.

In the fall of 2009, the faculty will vote on the criteria for each requirement. In addition, we will vote on the entire package: academic structures and general education curriculum.

## **The New Academic Structures**

Proposal #1:

- The number of regular semester courses required for graduation for the Bachelor's of Arts degree should be 32.
- The number of regular semester courses required for graduation for the Bachelor's of Music should be 36.

Proposal #2:

- The number of hours a course meets per week should continue to be determined by the academic department in consultation with the course instructor.
- 1 course = 4 credits

Proposal #3:

- The curriculum should continue to follow the "1/3-1/3-1/3" model now in place for the Bachelor's of Arts degree.
- The curriculum should continue to follow the "1/3-2/3" model for the Bachelor's of Music degree.

Proposal #4:

- When possible, align Spring Break with local public schools.

Proposal #5:

- The academic calendar should include a May Term.
- The number of May Terms required for graduation should be reduced to two.
- The break between the end of the spring semester and the start of May Term should be lengthened beyond the one day (Friday) break in the current calendar.

Proposal #6:

- Graduation should be moved to before May Term.

## The New General Education Curriculum

### *I. Simpson Seminar (1 Course)*

Simpson Seminar is an autonomous seminar for all students that is focused on a big question and in the interest area of the instructor. As the purpose of the Simpson Seminar course is to help new students adjust to the academy, all entering students will take a Simpson Seminar organized to meet their needs (i.e. separate sections for new freshmen, EWG undergraduates, education transfers and fulltime transfers.) The course will meet the criteria for the following embedded skills: Critical Thinking and Written Communication. A structure will be developed to accommodate students who, upon completion of the Simpson Seminar, do not meet the minimum standards for college-level writing.

### *II. Ourselves, Civilization, and the World (7 courses)*

Purpose: To prepare students to be engaged citizens by exploring enduring questions about ourselves, civilization, and the world. Students will take at least one course in each of the following areas.

- The Arts (AR)
- Civic Engagement (CE)
- Diversity and Power in the U.S. (DP)
- Ethics and Values Inquiry (EV)
- Global Perspectives (GP)
- Historical Perspectives (HP)
- Scientific Reasoning (SR)

### *III. Embedded Skills*

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for students to work on important life and professional skills throughout their college experience.

- **Two** Collaborative Leadership experiences (CL).
  - **Three** Critical Thinking experiences (CT)
  - **Two** Information Literacy experiences (IL)
  - **One** Intercultural Communication experience (IC)
  - **Two** Oral Communication experiences (OC)
  - **Two** Quantitative Reasoning experiences (QR)
  - **Four** Written Communication experiences (WC)
- In areas where more than one Embedded Skill is required, an approved outside of class experience may substitute for one of the Embedded Skills. No more than one of the Embedded Skills in each area can be fulfilled by an outside of the classroom experience and only if it meets the established criteria for the class-based Embedded Skill as approved by the appropriate faculty committee before the experience begins.

#### ***IV. Senior Capstone in the Major (1 Course)***

Purpose: The purpose of the Capstone is to help students integrate advanced, field-specific learning with the knowledge and skills of a liberal education. All departments will be asked to provide information on how the important issues and skills present in the general education program are addressed within the senior major capstone.

(A graphic representation of the curriculum can be found in Addendum E.)

#### **Notes**

- Faculty are being asked to approve the framework for general education outlined in this document. This includes the overarching concept of engaged citizenship, the criteria-based series of courses and the embedded skills. Faculty are not being asked to approve the criteria for each course and embedded skill.
- If the vote is positive, it is understood that the criteria for the above courses will be created and submitted to the faculty for review and approval in the fall of 2009. The criteria circulated previously as part of the proposal will form the basis of the discussion for each of the drafting committees. In addition, the plan for the assessment of the new curriculum will be brought to the faculty in the fall of 2009 for review and approval.
- If the vote is positive, the faculty will be asked to approve the plan for implementation which will be presented in the fall of 2009.
- Any of the Component II (Ourselves, Civilization and the World) courses may carry up to two Embedded Skills designations from any area.

## **F: Acronyms and Abbreviations**

---

AWAR	Adequate Warning and Referral - system in place to refer concerns regarding a student to counseling services
ARMC	Amy Robertson Music Center
BCC	Budget and Coordinating Committee Six members by rank (two full professors, two associate professors and two assistant professors or instructors).
BPAC	Blank Performing Arts Center
BSC	Brenton Student Center
CAB	Campus Activities Board - student run
CHIP	Capitol Hill Internship Program
CNC	Constitution and Nominating Committee. Five members (one from each Division).
CVIL	Center for Vocation and Integrative Learning
EPCC	Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee. Ten members, two from each Division (at least one of the two must be tenured).
EWG	Evening, Weekend, and Graduate program (formerly called DAL, Division of Adult Learning)
FDC	Faculty Development Committee. Five members (one from each Division).
FPC	Faculty Personnel Committee. Five tenured members with at least three full time professors
LAS	Liberal Arts Seminar - Simpson's first year program
LGBTQA	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning Alliance, a student group on campus
LPWG	Learning Programs Working Group - committee that studied Simpson's academic structure and liberal education curriculum
MAT	Master of Arts in Teaching offered through Evening, Weekend, and Graduate Program
QLC	Quantitative Literacy Competency

RLC	Religious Life Community
RSC	Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant for faculty through Academic Dean and Faculty Development office
SAC	Simpson Athletic Club - athletic facility memberships by the general public
SARA	Sexual Assault Response Advocates – provides 24/7 advocacy services to anyone in need of support and/or assistance due to sexual assault.
SGA	Student Government Association
SIFE	Students in Free Enterprise
SRC	Senior Colloquium - also known as "Senior Colloq"
SUSI	Simpson Urban Studies Institute - Simpson students are able to work with human service providers to tackle issues of social justice through projects like neighborhood cleanups, citizenship classes, and an education program at the Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville, Iowa.
TLC	a (Tradition of Learning and Caring) - retention program