

Prep period: Simpson gearing up for 2005 reaccreditation visit

By Jennifer Whitham

Simpson College is turning a critical eye on itself in preparation for the next accreditation, scheduled for the fall of 2005.

This review, done by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, has come along for Simpson once every 10 years since 1912. Making it one of the first colleges in Iowa to be accredited.

According to John Bolen, registrar and assistant academic dean, the purpose of the North Central Association as an accrediting body is to oversee and monitor the general quality of education provided by an institution.

"It is to guarantee that higher education is just that, 'higher education' not just glorified Sunday School or something like that," said Bolen.

This guarantee is not easy to come by. It involves extensive research and data collection from every department on campus, in order to have clear and accurate documentation that Simpson is doing what it says it is doing. This assessment process is a lengthy, time-consuming undertaking that all departments must take seriously.

"The North Central Association insists upon this assessment process. It has proven useful in determining whether or not an institution is accomplishing what it set out to do," said Bolen.

More specifically, accreditation and reaccreditation are based on five criteria (1) Does the institution have clear and

publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education? (2) Has the institution effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes? (3) Has the institution accomplished its educational and other purposes? (4) Can the institution continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness? (5) Does the institution demonstrate integrity in its practices and relationships?

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"Simpson has such a long and stellar history, we could be reaccredited by reputation and status," Bolen said. "Even as good as we are though, we have to have a solid assessment plan and results in order to get a clear and straightforward accreditation based on an excellent report."

The search for this excellent report begins with ongoing assessment efforts both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Humanities and fine arts generally utilize qualitative efforts where as math and science departments tend to employ quantitative evaluations.

Regardless of their approach to assessment, faculty at Simpson have and

continue to invest a great deal of time and effort into gathering assessment information and evaluating their department's effectiveness at achieving its goals, mission and objectives.

"In truth, assessment needs to be embraced as a necessary tool in helping to guide and direct academic endeavors at Simpson," said Bolen. "Faculty members are involved in this process everyday, each time a paper is graded or final grades are figured. This is just a more formal approach," added Bolen.

Although the North Central Association visit is still three years out, preliminary preparation for it is essential. That's why every department on campus has been conducting assessment research and data for the past seven years, since the last accreditation in 1995. Each department's approach to this formal assessment varies.

For example, the department of social science recently gave two assessment tests to graduating students, one in criminal justice and one in sociology. Additionally, sociology and criminal justice faculty are working on assessing student evaluations from agency administrators and others in the field experience required for all sociology and criminal justice majors as well as social work minors.

The physical education department gives exit examinations to seniors in physical education and data is recorded on the percentage of students who pass the exit exam with a specific score. Surveys are

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NEW FACES



Ridgeway



Doling



Duke



Shin



Wichman



Witke



Samek



Kim



McCoy



Fry



Park



Voigts



Ellens

Duff Ridgeway has joined the college advancement office as director of gift planning. Ridgeway was director of planned giving at Indiana State University prior to coming to Simpson.

Amy Doling has joined the science department as assistant professor of biology. Previously, Doling was a graduate student and Ph.D. candidate at Harvard Medical School in the department of microbiology and molecular genetics.

Michael Duke has joined the music department as instructor of music. Prior to his hire, Duke was a graduate student at Indiana University.

Eun Hee Shin has been hired as assistant professor of religion. Dr. Shin was a visiting assistant professor of religion at Ohio Northern University prior to joining the Simpson faculty.

Denise Wichman has been hired as secretary in alumni relations. Previously, Wichman worked as a secretary in an

elementary school in Kansas City, MO.

Coreen Witke '91, has been hired as director of alumni relations. Prior to her hire at Simpson, Witke was quality assurance manager for GeoLearning, Inc., in West Des Moines.

Kim E. Samek has joined the business department as an instructor of accounting. Previously, Samek worked as a Certified Public Accountant at Price Waterhouse Coopers and as a CPA with the Department of Justice, both in Phoenix.

James Kim has been hired as a vocal music instructor. Prior to joining the Simpson faculty, Kim was pursuing a doctorate at the College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati.

Ron McCoy has joined the communication studies department as an instructor. McCoy previously served as an adjunct instructor at Des Moines Area Community College. Prior to that, McCoy spent a number of years in television broadcasting.

John J. Fry has joined the history department as assistant professor of history. Previously, Fry spent five years as a graduate instructor of history at the University of Iowa.

Jin Young (Jean) Park has joined the music department as instructor of musical accompaniment and piano. Previously, Park was earning her doctorate in piano performance and pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma.

Adam Voigts has been hired as assistant vice president for business services/controller. Previously, Voigts worked as a public accountant for Grant Thornton in Colorado Springs.

Steve Ellens '96, has been hired as assistant men's basketball coach, freshman academic athletic liaison and to assist with athletic marketing. Prior to joining the Simpson staff, Ellens coached and taught English and journalism at Horizon High School in Phoenix.

Reaccreditation:

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also being developed to send out to alumni to seek data about their perceptions of study in the department as well as surveys to gather information from supervising teachers, internship supervisors and other professionals in the field to determine the rate of successful learning by majors.

According to Marilyn Mueller, professor of management, after over seven years of concerted effort the department of management, accounting and economics' assessment program is well developed. As part of the department's assessment efforts, a basic math test is administered to students enrolled in Economics 101 and to graduating management, accounting and economics majors.

Also, seniors graduating in management take the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Exam in Business and seniors graduating in economics take the ETS Major Field Exam in Economics. Both tests are administered on an alternate-year basis. Finally, graduating management majors complete the Senior Survey, while many accounting majors sit for the CPA Exam, the results of which are included in the assessment report.

Although, as stated before, this

assessment process is a requirement for colleges and universities seeking reaccreditation, as Bolen pointed out, the information collected through the assessment plan serves an additional purpose of arguably equal importance.

"This process forces us to focus in more detail on what we are trying to do here at Simpson and helps us to think to ourselves, 'is this what we are really trying to accomplish?'" Bolen said. "The benefit is that once we determine and know for sure what we want to do, we can evaluate if our standards are too easily met or if they are comparable to national standards. Once we analyze the data, we can make an educated decision on where we should go from here in order to strengthen specific areas of our curriculum," he added.

As the college collectively looks ahead to the upcoming reaccreditation, Bolen considers the proactive rather than reactive approach all departments on campus are employing.

"The faculty need to be commended for the responsibilities they have taken on and how they have come through with their mission statements and assessment plans, this has and will continue to involve a lot of hardwork and time on their part."

Carse Fitness Center 2002

The Carse Fitness Center at Simpson College recently underwent some major changes.

The facility, which is a weight/training room available to students, faculty, staff and members of the Simpson Athletic Club, is located in Cowles Athletic Center. At the time of its construction in 1996, Carse Fitness Center was viewed as one of the top weight training facilities in the Iowa Conference. Inevitably, as time has passed, the need to update equipment in the facility became a priority for the athletic department.

A group of administrators, faculty, staff, students and coaches formed a committee to research and discuss possible improvements. The committee developed a plan that involved adding a variety of new equipment and atmospherics to the facility. This included four new speed

treadmills, two new recumbent bikes, four fitness cinema systems (which include four FM digital transmitters and 14 mounts), five power platforms and racks, a set of Cemco Rubber Dumbbells with end plates, new mirrors and a new security desk. Updates were completed July 17.

Ron Peterson, assistant athletic director says the updated Carse Fitness Center proves that Simpson's athletic department continually strives to get better. "I think the improvements show our current student athletes and prospective student athletes that we are serious about making weight training a part of athletics at Simpson," says Peterson. He adds, "It puts us on at least a level playing field with the top teams in the Iowa Conference. It is as good or better a facility than every school we compete with has in place."

LIFE AFTER FIVE



A look at life with Joanne Weeks

Weeks

Title: payroll and general ledger clerk

Joined Simpson staff: 21 years ago

Family: husband, Jim; daughters, Heather and Justin. Seven grandchildren; Johnny, 8; Alexis, 6; Madison, 4; Cameo, 7; Autumn, 5; Jacey, 3 and Mackenzie, 1.

Likes most about job: "The benefits are wonderful, both my daughters graduated from here. I like the vicinity, not having to travel to Des Moines and I like the people. It is an enjoyable atmosphere."

Outside of Simpson: also serves as secretary/bookkeeper for husband's drywall business.

Interests: spending time with grandkids and family, walking, attending grandkids' ballgames, weekend trips with husband, spending time at home or in the yard enjoying the garden and flowers.

Moody honored upon retirement

Martha Kay Moody is honoring her son Dr. Joe Kay Moody's retirement with a \$40,503 endowed fund to support student research at Simpson.

The Joe Kay Moody Excellence in Research Grants and Scholarships is the first endowment of its kind at the college. It is designed to encourage full-time Simpson students majoring in biology and biochemistry to become involved in conducting serious and scholarly research and to reward their efforts.

Students at the junior level may apply for the research grant by submitting a grant proposal to a selection committee. Scholarships will be awarded to recognize and reward a student who completes a quality research project during his or her junior year.

FOOTNOTES

Ron Albrecht, professor of music, presented a paper titled "Memorizing Advanced Piano Music" at the Iowa Music Teachers Association state convention June 3 at Drake University in Des Moines.

Jim Benjamin, assistant professor of computer science, attended the Syllabus Summer Conference 2002 in Santa Clara, California. The general subject was technology and its uses in on-line education dealing with total on-line courses, hybrid courses, and course enrichment via on-line technology.

John Benoit, associate professor of music, attended the Historic Brass Society's 18th annual Early Brass Festival held on the campus of the University of Connecticut at Storrs on July 26-28. He also took part in a private tour of the Brass Player's Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Jackie Brittingham, assistant professor of biology, and Seth Williams (Simpson student, Class of '04) attended the 42nd Annual Midwest Developmental Biology

meeting in June at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Seth was recognized with an undergraduate student award for his presentation.

Michael Duke, instructor of music, was invited to participate at the Australian National Band and Orchestra Clinic (A.N.B.O.C.) in Perth, Australia. He presented two papers titled "Saxophone for Non-Saxophone Players" and "Saxophone for Saxophone Players."

R. Kevin LaGree, president of Simpson College, participated in a panel discussion on the book *Faculty Misconduct in Collegiate Teaching* by John M. Braxton and Alan E. Bayer at the summer meeting of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church. Dr. Braxton, professor of education at the Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University, chaired the panel.

Robert Larsen, professor of music, successfully completed the thirtieth anniversary season of the Des Moines Metro Opera in July, giving musical and stage directions to his 98th, 99th and 100th productions for the company. His new *Anthology of Arias for Coloratura Soprano* was published in July (co-edited with Martha Gerhart, New York coach on the faculty of Southern Methodist University) by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Eduardo Magalhaes, associate professor of political science, was a faculty consultant at the annual AP Government and Politics Reading held June 10-18 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Justin Nostrala, assistant professor of art, has a drawing and a painting at an art show called Iowa Exhibited 17. It is in downtown Des Moines at the Polk County

Heritage Gallery, 111 Court Ave., Polk County Office Building from Aug. 26 through Oct. 25.

Jeff Parmelee, assistant professor of biology, received an Iowa Science Foundation Grant for \$2,080 (with Paul Frese) titled: "Ensuring the survival of a species: the ecology of juvenile timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus*) in Iowa." He was an author for a poster, "Farm ponds as critical habitats for amphibians," at the Mississippi River Research Consortium, La Crosse, Wisconsin; "The ecology and conservation of the timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) in an agriculture landscape: Preliminary results;" and a poster "Using radio-telemetry and GIS to conserve the timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) in Iowa," at both the annual meeting of the Iowa Academy of Science in Des Moines and the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles/Herpetologist's League in Kansas City, Missouri.

Steve Rose, associate professor of education, presented the topic "Quality Schools and Brain Compatible Learning for the Middle School Learner" at the Iowa Middle School Conference at Simpson on June 25. He also gave the same presentation at the Heartland AEA Middle School conference at Norwalk Middle School on Aug. 1. Rose received an Honorable Mention award in the adult general category for the poem "Windsock to the Seasons" published by Lyric Iowa, 2002.

Ruth Weatherly, associate professor of management, presented a seminar on managing customer service for the administrators and staff of Living History Farms on May 23.

THE CORNERSTONE

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THE CORNERSTONE is published seven times during the regular academic year by the Simpson College public relations department for faculty, staff, administrators and trustees. To submit a story idea or a news item, or to share a comment or suggestion, write to 31 Hillman Hall, Simpson College, 701 North C Street, Indianola, Iowa 50125; call 515-961-1600; or e-mail whitham@simpson.edu.

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