

Final Report Spring 2004

New Faculty Mentoring and Information Fluency

Birmingham-Southern College, Susan K. Hagen

The purpose of this project was to bring together new faculty and their faculty mentors with library liaisons, representatives from Academic Computing (now reorganized as Information Technology), and students in order to introduce them to the ways in which teaching technologies were being used at Birmingham-Southern College. The aim was to help beginning faculty take issues of information fluency and technology as an aide in teaching, learning, and research into account at the outset of their course development for the College.

Grant money was used to provide

- luncheons that brought these groups of people together for discussions about information fluency and teaching,
- stipends for faculty and staff offering workshops in information fluency/technology in teaching,
- student stipends, and
- other supplies and meals.

A complete accounting of disbursements of grant funds appears in the attached budget report. A complete list of workshops and meetings follows this report. Workshops were open to all teaching faculty, full or part-time, and frequently to staff as well.

The New Faculty Mentoring Program already existed at the time of this grant, but focused mainly on orientation to the College calendar and general academic culture. Focusing on information fluency provided a practical way to discuss course development and teaching resources on campus. The grant came at an important time in the College's development of curriculum and pedagogy as well. Approved in the spring of 2002, the IF grant came at the end of the College's first year of implementation of the Foundations Plan for General Education, which emphasizes non-traditional classroom methodologies, technology as a partner in the academic process, and clear and effective writing and speaking. Foundations also acknowledges the role of all members of a college community in the general education of undergraduate students. Consequently, the bringing together of entering and established faculty, staff, and students in the IF project reflected the type of collaborative spirit the new general education program seeks to create. Moreover, the grant provided resources for workshops on the types of developing skills and perspectives needed for the Foundations general education curriculum that focuses on non-traditional courses for first-year students.

Those first-year courses are not core courses with a common syllabus; rather, they are taught in the instructor's discipline, have only first-year students in them, are highly student-centered, rely on collaborative learning, and seek to show disciplinary engagement out of the classroom. The broad range of skills that make up Information Fluency as defined by Rettig and Hagen (["Stakeholders and Strategies in Information Fluency," *Transformations*](#)) sit at the center of many of these courses as students used IF in recording their experiences and in peer teaching. Jim Rettig's visit to campus, and of course his Common Hour presentation to the College community-at-large, served as a good impetus for some faculty to begin thinking more broadly about the place of academic

libraries in preparing students to deal with the gathering, storing, analyzing, and transmission of "information" in the twenty-first century.

Highlighting the changing place of librarians in undergraduate education was one of the unwritten goals of the New Faculty Mentoring and Information Fluency Project. This was accomplished in part by bringing new faculty together with library liaisons for their disciplines within their first month on campus. The number of library sessions conducted for individual classes has increased significantly over the past three years, in part we believe due to the early connections made between instructors and librarians. In addition, several of the new faculty made use of library support services in scanning (or learning how to scan) materials for inclusion in Blackboard, and were very involved in ordering materials for the library collection from the start, both for themselves and their students. The developing list of [library guides](#) for individual courses also reflects the type of instructor-librarian collaboration we sought to develop, although to what extent that is a result of the IF grant is difficult to say. Bringing new faculty, their mentors, librarians, and students in the new person's discipline is something that we hope will remain part of the mentoring program. Even better results than we saw during the grant period could be achieved, however, by better explaining the purpose of the meetings to the individual librarian liaisons.

The extent to which concerns for information fluency have situated themselves in the designs of courses at Birmingham-Southern College as a result of the IF grant is hard to determine. In addition to the implementation of the new general education curriculum, a new science center and a totally remodeled humanities center equipped for the convenient use of electronic material in the classroom opened during the grant period. Each of these, and the fast-moving applications of technology to undergraduate teaching in general, has influenced the creation and redesign of courses at BSC over the past three years. We do know, however, that discussions with students have influenced the ways in which, and the frequency with which, faculty have created course sites on Blackboard.

Outcomes of the project or concurrent with the project

- Introduction of new faculty to BSC library disciplinary liaisons and electronic resources
- Introduction of new faculty to student expectations about the use of technology in teaching
- Orientation of new faculty to IF resources on campus
- Collaborative instruction/discussion between "generations" of College faculty
- Heightened faculty awareness of IF issues in general education

Faculty who took part in the project reported that the luncheon discussions and workshops were helpful in adapting their new positions at Birmingham-Southern College. Several expressed a desire for more open-faculty discussions about specific applications and assignments used by their colleagues, though. Susan Hagen, who coordinated the project as Associate Dean of the College, reported on its progress during visits at two ACS institutions, Hendricks College and Trinity University, for the purpose of discussions of the place of information fluency in undergraduate general education programs. Dr. Hagen also referred to the project during a panel discussion on technology in teaching at the 2002 SAMLA meeting in Baltimore ("The Road to Xanadu: Evaluating Creative and Scholarly Work," SAADE session).

Schedule of Workshops and Meetings for 2002-2003 New Faculty Mentoring and Information Fluency Program

Summer and Fall 2002

- Tue., 11 June IF planning workshop with IF Committee and Students
10:00am-3:00pm/Stockham Parlor
- Wed., 4 Sept. Reception for Mentoring Program
4:00pm/Stockham Parlor
- Thu., 5 Sept. IF luncheon for new faculty members--Scot Duncan and Rodney Dunning
with Stacy Thornberry, Susan Hagen, faculty members and students
Noon / Greensboro Room/2nd FL Norton Center
- Tue., 17 Sept. Common Hour speaker, Jim Rettig, University of Richmond Librarian
- Wed., 18 Sept. IF luncheon for new faculty members -- Tynes Cowan, Jim Neel and Gail
Smith with Janice Poplau, Guy Hubbs, Susan Hagen, faculty members,
and students
Noon / Greensboro Room/2nd FL Norton Center
- Fri., 20 Sept. Library resources and critical thinking.....with Ford and Pitts
- Wed., 25 Sept. IF luncheon for new faculty members -- Kathy Hollingsworth and Sara
Robicheaux with Caroline Smith, Charlotte Ford, Susan Hagen, faculty
members, and students
Noon / Greensboro Room/2nd FL Norton Center
- Wed., 9 Oct. Breakfast meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
7:30am / Faculty Dining Room/1st FL Norton Center
- Mon., 14 Oct. Blackboard, FrontPage, and FTP.....with Hagen, Thomas, Whorton,
and Worley
- Thu., 7 Nov. Breakfast meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
7:30am / Faculty Dining Room/1st FL Norton Center
- Thu., 5 Dec. End of term lunch meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
11:30am / Stephens Conference Center

Open Faculty Workshops Spring 2003

- Tue., 10 Feb. Using Blackboard More Effectively Workshop
3:00pm / Humanities Center 213

- Thu., 20 Feb. Interactive Technology for Peer Teaching Workshop
3:30pm / Stephens Science Center 130
- Tue., 11 Mar. Peer Teaching and Collaborative Learning Workshop
4:00pm / Faculty Dining Room
- Wed., 2 Apr. Carnegie Academy Teaching Showcase Workshop
4:00pm / Stockham Parlor (Postponed)
- Tue., 13 May End of term lunch meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
Noon / Stockham Parlor
- Fall 2003
- Wed., 3 Sept. Reception for Mentoring Program
4:00pm / Stockham Parlor
- Wed., 17 Sept. Breakfast meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
7:30am / Faculty Dining Room/1st FL Norton Center
- Wed., 15 Oct. Meeting with new faculty and library liaisons
Noon / Greensboro Room / 2nd FI Norton Center
- Thur., 4 Dec. End of term lunch meeting with new faculty and their mentoring partners
Noon / Stockham Parlor