Coordinating Committee on Bates Education Newsletter
Vol. 1, Iss. 4 December 2004

If you would like to read some of the materials that we have been mulling over, please go to Ladd, search under Course: Bates Education Committee (Instructor: Bonnie Shulman) or go to our web site http://www.bates.edu/goals-bates-education-04-05.xml

Future Meetings

Take a break from grading and final exam preparation and join us for a glass (or two!) of wine. Even a half hour of your time would be great. An opportunity to contemplate and compare an array of models for a new Bates Education, some original, some culled from the panoply of options at other institutions will arise at the Perry Atrium on December 13th from 2:00-6:00 pm. We planned this event to allow as many people as possible to attend, hopefully for a 2-hour slot: 2-4, 3-5, 4-6 or any time in between. Please join us!

Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, Core Professor of Philosophy and Women’s Studies at The Graduate School for Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences of The Union Institute & University will be at Bates, to speak and interact with faculty in the Keck Classroom on Thursday, January 20th from 4.00 to 6.00 p.m. Dr. Minnich will reflect on why interdisciplinary education is so important, what it does for us and our students, and why it matters for public life and moral concerns. Such reflection also helps us think through what our goals are, and how to assess whether we have achieved them.

News and Updates

Models:
We have been considering different models for achieving the goals of a Bates Education. We recognize and struggle with the difficulty in considering new ideas (such as those presented in the writing proposals) in the context of our current distribution requirements. On December 13th, large posters representing some examples of approaches that could be used to encourage students to meet different educational goals will be available. At this informal gathering, and beyond, we would like to engage in a discussion of the features of these models that are liked and disliked by the faculty. Please come to learn about these models, share your opinions of them and feel free to suggest alternatives that you think might work well at Bates. We expect to have similar discussions with students during the winter term.
Writing:

Writing consistently has been highlighted as a goal of a Bates Education. In well-attended open meetings last month (about seventy people showed up over the three days), and at the meeting of Program and Department chairs, the Design Team, together with the Coordinating Committee, presented a proposal entitled “Moving Forward with Writing at Bates” and listened to responses from attendees. The proposal presented several options regarding ways to make writing more visible in the Bates curriculum, and to provide continued attention to student writing from first through senior year. People’s responses (recorded and considered by the Coordinating Committee members) showed enthusiasm for many of the ideas and strong concerns regarding the impact of changes on program and departmental curricula. We encourage these discussions to continue within programs and departments. If you missed a presentation and want to learn more, or you have comments, new creative ideas or concerns about the proposal, please feel free to contact any of the members of the coordinating committee.

Interdisciplinary Study:

Discussion is underway regarding the roles and values of interdisciplinary study in a Bates Education. A variety of approaches are used at other institutions to encourage students to gain understanding of a topic through different disciplinary lenses, and we hope to alert you to some of these approaches on December 13th.

Just a Few Statistics About Our Students

Data Obtained from Institutional Planning and Analysis

These data are from the senior survey (2003) where students report on their own activities while they are in college.

37.2% do an off-campus internship
54.4% engage in intramural or recreational athletics
53.0% compete in intercollegiate athletics
51.4% do volunteer service
34.1% are involved in the performing arts

Please talk to us!

We are: John Cole, Dyk Eusden, Leslie Hill, Lynne Lewis, Laurie O'Higgins, Kirk Read, Paula Schlax, Bonnie Shulman, Yang Jerng Hwa, Marie Hemmelgarn, Jill Reich, Pam Baker.