

Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
From: Dr. John D. Miller
Chair, University Lectures Committee
Date: 4/18/2013
Re: Report of University Lectures Committee activities for 2012-2013 academic year

Committee Members (Faculty)

Peggy Agee, Department of Social Work and Communication Sciences and Disorders
Ayse Balas, College of Business and Economics
Virginia Beard, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice
Robert Marmorstein, Department of Math and Computer Science
Jennie Miscek, Department of English and Modern Languages
Wade Znosko, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

Committee Members (Student)

Gilbert Hall, College of Arts and Sciences
Abena Arkorful, College of Business and Economics
Paige Reitz, College of Education and Human Services

The University Lectures Committee is charged with three goals:

1. Promote and sustain the Faculty Colloquium series
2. Promote, sustain, and host the annual Simkins Lecture
3. Apply for the following year's Woodrow Wilson Fellow (by January)
 - a. Host the annual Woodrow Wilson Fellow (the April a full year after the selection)

Through in-person meetings at the start of each semester and via email communications with the entire committee and between the chair and individual members, we successfully completed Goals One and Two.

Faculty Colloquium

This year funds were provided to support two award recipients. Calls for proposals were sent to faculty during the fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters.

Fall

Eight submissions were received. The committee chose Professor Chris Kjorness' "Ché Be Jammin': The Role of The Cuban Revolution in the Development of Reggae." About twenty students, faculty, and members of the public attended his lecture on November 14th in Chichester Hall. A dessert reception followed.

Spring

Four submissions were received. The committee chose Professor Carl Riden's "Exploring Citizenship through a Transdisciplinary Lens." Just over twenty faculty, staff, and students attended her lecture on April 16th in Chichester Hall. A dessert reception followed.

The number of submissions this year represented a modest increase over last year, due perhaps to the committee's encouraging students to nominate their favorite professors' research (which was relayed to the faculty member as an incentive to apply) via the committee's new facebook page as well as promoting the CFP to Department Heads to announce in their meetings. Nevertheless, the number of proposals and attendance remains disappointing. Suggestions for improving both next year include approaching and encouraging specific faculty members working on au courant, high-visible research accessible to students to submit proposals, thus enriching the candidate pool; changing the dates and times of the talks to earlier in the semester and earlier in the evening; and changing the name of the series from "Faculty Colloquium" to "Longwood Colloquium" to avoid any misunderstanding among students that it is a colloquium for faculty and not welcoming of students.

Simkins Lecture

David Radcliff, who has worked for economic and social justice in some of the world's poorest and most exotic places, was this year's Simkins Lecturer, hosted by Professor Melanie Marks.

In addition to meeting with seven classes, Radcliff's presentation on October 24th in Hiner Auditorium examined the reality that, despite unparalleled global connections and an escalating global economy, millions of the world's people have been left out of the rush to prosperity. He discussed how women are often devalued and exploited, how native communities find their lands and rights overrun, and how even those whose work connects them to the global economy often struggle to survive. The presentation featured photos and stories from the perimeter of global society, showing both the beauty and struggles of people in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Over eighty people attended the lecture.

The fall 2013 Simkins lecture will be hosted by Professor Chris Swanson, who is bringing the composer Damon Ferrante to campus. Mr. Ferrante will address the identity, role and importance of American music in the 21st century as well as the relevance of art music on contemporary society.

Woodrow Wilson Fellow/RAFT Debate

Last year our committee decided not to pursue hosting a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. The committee advised Ken Perkins that the WWF might not be a resource the University should make a priority. In lieu of the WWF, we proposed using the money allocated for it (but to spend no more than is usually budgeted for a faculty colloquium) hosting a "Raft Debate."

In a Raft Debate, faculty members/victims of a hypothetical shipwreck debate which of them should be allowed to use the vessel's only escape raft, based on the merits of their respective academic disciplines; i.e., whose expertise and knowledge would benefit the world the most? The debate is a mix of serious academic discussion with wry, sarcastic wit that explores the public role and greater value of education. The winner of the debate is selected based on audience applause.

The debate will include Dr. Jeff Halliday as judge and moderator, Dr. Jim Jordan representing College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Chris Jones representing College of Education and Human Services, and Dr. Bennie Waller representing College of Business and Economics. Playing the role of Devil's Advocate will be Dr. Bill Abrams. Longwood's first ever Raft Debate will be held on April 19th in Hiner 207.

Future Goals: Promotion and Publicity

As mentioned above, the number of proposals received and attendees at our events remains discouraging. But moving the dates and times to slots more amenable to students' and faculty/staff

schedules, as well as “priming the pump” of the field of proposals to choose speakers whose research is timely and of broad interest may help remedy this problem.