

PSTL POSTS

PSTL postsecondary
teaching & learning

College of Education + Human Development



Graduate students
who want to make
a difference

p2

MA
program
a success



p8

CEHD Reads the Common Book



p10

Microlearning with
Algebra and Literature

IN THIS ISSUE >>

WINTER 2012

- p2 DGS Corner
- p2 It's No Secret—
PsTL Is Transforming Higher Education
- p5 PsTL Research Series
- p5 Remembering David Ghere by
Helping Student Professional Development
- p6 A Living Legacy of Devotion:
Liz and Carleton McCambridge
- p6 Distinguished Educator: Barbara Hodne
- p7 Anatomy and Physiology
Say Hello to POGIL
- p8 The Common Book: **Outcasts United**
- p10 Microfinance: Algebra Lessons Lead
to Global Awareness
- p11 President Kaler Visits PsTL

Jeanne Higbee's DGS CORNER

This fall PsTL welcomed 14 MA students, 2 new certificate students, and 2 new graduate students minoring in Multicultural College Teaching and Learning. For a new graduate program to have this “show rate” is truly exceptional, but even more impressive are the students themselves. I am definitely learning as much from them as they are from me!

We are actively recruiting students for the Fall 2012 MA cohort. The final deadline for Fall 2012 is May 1, 2012. Please refer prospective students to www.cehd.umn.edu/PsTL/Graduate/default.asp, or have them contact pstlgrad@umn.edu.

PsTL also welcomes partnerships for providing practicum (50 hours over a semester) and internship (3 hours per week per credit hour) opportunities that enable graduate students to gain experience working in multicultural postsecondary settings. Those interested in hosting a practicum and/or internship student, contact pstlgrad@umn.edu. +



IT'S NO SECRET— PsTL Is Transforming Higher Education

The new Master of Arts in Multicultural College Teaching and Learning has arrived. The news traveled fast! This year we have welcomed MA students from Minnesota, Wisconsin, China, Spain, Panama, and Colombia. In all, 14 students are pursuing their dreams of making a difference in higher education and preparing themselves to become effective educators in a multicultural world.

The Need for This Program

In almost any U.S. educational setting, you can't help but see more diverse students. These students arrive with conflicting priorities and challenges, like learning English while maintaining their native language, fitting in with classmates while honoring their own culture, overcoming tragedy, brutality, and even family loss, being a world away from everything familiar, and living in different circumstances while adjusting to a new life.

HELLO, I am excited to share the Winter 2012 issue of *PsTL Posts* with you which features the work of our graduate students, undergraduate students, and faculty. These pages will both describe new developments and reflect our continued commitment to making higher education accessible and meaningful for diverse students.

Our new Master of Arts degree in Multicultural College Teaching and Learning officially got underway in the fall. We have 14 energized and amazing students in the program (story on pages 2–4). For the 2011 Common Book, our first-year undergraduate students read *Outcasts United* by Warren St. John. This book focuses on the Fugees, a soccer team started by Coach Luma Mufleh for kids who are recent refugees in a town near Atlanta, Georgia. Our students had an enormous thrill meeting Coach Luma and Mr. St. John (story on pages 8–9).

Finally, this issue features Murray Jensen, who recently received a two-year National Science Foundation grant to research innovative pedagogy and curriculum to improve learning in introductory anatomy and physiology courses.



PsTL STAFF

(From left) Barry Stehlik (executive administrative office specialist), Amy Lee (chair), Jennifer Franko (executive administrator), and (seated) Annette Digre (assistant to the chair).

Congratulations are in order also for Barbara Hodne who was named the College of Continuing Education’s 2011 Distinguished Educator.

Please stay in touch by emailing us at pstlpost@umn.edu or arranging a visit. We hope you enjoy this issue!

AMY LEE, Department Chair,
Postsecondary Teaching and Learning



<< GRADUATE WORKSHOP >>

The changing student demographics of the U.S. thus far have been addressed somewhat at the K–12 level. But with a shifting population of students at the collegiate level, the need for appropriate pedagogy for the multicultural classroom has increased dramatically. Instructors and student support professionals at the post-baccalaureate level need to be deeply knowledgeable about multicultural populations and their educational needs: they need to design curricula, strategies, and courses, and they need to address issues of democratic education and social equity in the broadest of terms.

In other countries, also, teachers acknowledge that they must learn how to integrate social justice and diversity education principles. One of our MA students, **Gabriel Castro Martinez**, from Colombia, an eight-year veteran teacher, is ambitious to “contribute to the evolution of better teaching and research practices . . . in a variety of educational scenarios in my country.” Gabriel finds in this program a multicultural view of education that provides “opportunities to broaden my knowledge and my teaching experiences. A critical reflection on the issues encourages me to inquire and transform my role as a participant and facilitator in the teaching-learning process.” His experience is in foreign language teaching.

Comparative Advantage

This MA program has defined a set of learning outcomes that are clear and compelling. We strive to create long-term, systemic, and comprehensive solutions for improving the quality of teaching and learning for all undergraduates, particularly those who traditionally have been underserved in higher education. A major tenet of our program is inclusive pedagogy. We have included a basis for designing assessments as well. We seek to instill outstanding creativity and dedication among our students.

Students in the program recognize immediately the difference in focus. **Mary McKay**, an MA student from Wisconsin, said, “The faculty and staff in PsTL are among the most committed people that I have ever worked with, and everyone is genuinely invested in the development and success of their undergraduate and graduate students.”

Educational Rigor

The MA in Multicultural College Teaching and Learning is well grounded in theory and focuses the attention of students on the integration of theory and practice. Multicultural education and universal instructional design are central features in the core curriculum. Faculty members possess expertise in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Dang Yang “This is an opportunity for me to learn new paradigms of understanding, learning, and teaching. The program’s focus on creating a democratic and inclusive learning environment has provided a significant opportunity to reflect on my own professional practice and assumptions about my role in higher education.”



Danni Song “I love practical learning, only through practical experience can one really understand a subject; I love to interact with people, the collision of different thoughts is the source of my inspiration. ... I plan to keep on studying and gain a Doctorate before going back to China. ... I want to help the spreading of Chinese culture and language.”



Gabriel Castro Martinez “My endeavors as a teacher are focused on a larger definition of inclusive pedagogy embracing quality in education for diverse groups and ongoing improvement through peer partnerships within disadvantaged populations. I would feel largely satisfied to contribute to the evolution of better teaching and research practices both in my post-graduate faculty and parallel departments and in a variety of educational scenarios in my country.”



Elizabeth Reich “I grew up in a small town with little diversity, so I had a bit of culture shock when I went to college. My graduate work is a continuation of that, meaning that I want to immerse myself and be the best higher educational professional I can be.”



Andrea Herrera Dulcet “If we create inclusive responsible courses and become ‘whole’ educators (no matter what subject we teach) our students will have a successful learning experience. There is no such thing as a bad student, but in my life I have encountered lots of bad teachers.”



Roberto De Freitas “[This program] articulates a pledge to social impartiality, fairness, shared reciprocal respect, and embraces all cultural vantage points. The entry level point is where the learner is at a given social and political time, and [this program] elevates the consciousness of the learner and teaches the learner how to navigate barriers to reach their goal of success.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

postsecondary multicultural education, developmental education, particularly universal instructional design, and classroom research and assessment.

We have the benefit of the instructional expertise and the scholarship of faculty members who will be teaching the courses. The PsTL department houses an interdisciplinary faculty with extensive, relevant research profiles and ample experiences in graduate education. Our faculty members are imbued with a multidisciplinary focus and have been trained in a variety of disciplines; many have had previous teaching experience in the University’s General College. They work as a cohesive team.

What Drives PsTL MA Students

One of our students, **Roberto De Freitas** from Panama, said, “I belong here! The MA program’s core values are in line with my values in relation to pedagogy for critical and social consciousness.” **Danni Song**, another student, plans to return home to China with “the advanced teaching style and ideas acquired from your university, from America.”

Our graduates will be able to hold leadership positions in educational settings because of this experience, their deep knowledge, their communication skills, and their overall expertise. The educational community will welcome a unique cadre of professionals with the potential to impact future college students.

Professional growth is another benefit for students in this program. McKay added, “I am impressed by how much I’ve grown personally and professionally since my first day of class last fall.”

Anise McDowell, who completed PsTL’s Post-baccalaureate Certificate in Innovations in Undergraduate Multicultural Teaching and Learning last spring and continues with the MA program, “would like to teach first-year-students and continue to develop my role in student affairs.” In addition to multicultural education, program principles that appeal to Anise are universal design and social justice education.

Fulfilling dreams to make a difference motivate our MA students. **Andrea Herrera Dulcet**, who is from Spain, taught in China and the United States, and wants to become an American citizen and teach Spanish here, said she wants to “inspire all my students to travel, see the world, learn about different cultures, and understand that the ‘others’ are not others but are ‘ours.’”

Expanding opportunities in the educational field for non-teachers is also an objective of this program. MA student **Elizabeth Reich**, who is a native Minnesotan and whose passion is to work in university student services, feels that she will develop expertise in inclusion so she can “develop programs targeting diverse populations to ensure their success” and be “of more service to the educational system by helping more students on a daily basis.”

Dang Yang, a student in the program and also a multicultural recruiter and retention coordinator in the School of Education at the University in Wisconsin-Stout, said that his “ambitions include teaching social justice courses in a higher education

setting.... working with students to help them navigate through their own social identity development and understanding what factors continue to affect that process.”

Spreading the Good News, Keeping the Promise

Becoming a successful and caring educator today requires a different set of skills than in the past. Today's students have changed the paradigm. And today's teachers are advancing to new levels of instructional design that rely on research (a great deal of it coming from PsTL faculty) to explore and create universal principles.

As PsTL's first cohort of students experiences the MA in Multicultural College Teaching and Learning, their leader is Professor **Jeanne Higbee**, one of the University's most accomplished teachers. Her oversight will ensure that our vision is translated into the hearts and minds of our students.

At its inception in 2005, then University President Robert Bruininks called for the newly created Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning to redirect its mission so as to become a center of leadership in the transition from access to success, as well as in multicultural, developmental education. We have accepted that challenge throughout our programs, and will fulfill that mission.

MA student De Freitas put his perspective into a poetic note: “In the arena of education you are forever a student, even when you attain a PhD. As I view from my window, nothing is ‘terminal’ about the river of learning that flows forever.” +

PSTL RESEARCH SERIES FOR FALL 2011

The multidisciplinary backgrounds and professional interests of PsTL faculty members are vital to their research projects. This fall, the department presented three colloquia:

Increasing African American Male Access to Postsecondary Education: A Look at Relationships and Habits:

On September 29, Assistant Professor Na'im Madyun addressed the question of how to improve outcomes for African American men in higher education. Madyun's research suggests practical solutions that require the intersecting of social capital and cultural capital.

Narratives and Counter Narratives: Using Pedagogy and Space to Tell the Stories of First-Generation College Students:

On October 6, Assistant Professor Rashne Jehangir drew on her longitudinal research study describing the experience of first-generation, low-income college students. Her analysis encouraged discussion of how institutions might bridge the gaps and grasp the unique strengths of these students.

An Introduction to Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL):

On November 10, Associate Professor Murray Jensen and Graduate Research Assistant Allison Mattheis explained this teaching-learning philosophy emphasizing cooperative group learning, student-centered instruction, and inquiry-based approaches. Jensen received a National Science Foundation grant to support improvement in undergraduate anatomy and physiology teaching through POGIL (see page 7). +

Remembering David Ghere by Helping Student Professional Development



Many graduate and undergraduate students simply do not have a chance to get out into the professional world while they are students. Yet, such exposure provides an opportunity to meet and hear the academics they have read, converse with future peers, participate in a professional association experience, and gather information about their career choices.

This year, Professor **Jeanne L. Higbee** initiated a fund in honor of the late Dr. David Ghere, a professor of history

here in the college, who was beloved by students and colleagues alike. This fund, which Dr. Higbee established with a cash gift and an ongoing pledge of support, provides cash awards to students (typically \$50 to \$200) so that they can attend local, state, and regional conferences in their fields.

Already, this fund has made a difference. In October, six PsTL students attended the Minnesota College Personnel Association meeting. These experiences would not have been possible without the support of the Ghere Fund. We hope that this fund will grow over time as faculty, staff, and alumni observe its impact on our graduate and undergraduate students.

David Ghere was a long-time professor in General College and chair of its Multicultural Concerns Committee. He was a very student-centered teacher

who was known for creating historic simulations that engaged his students in the study of history. According to Dr. Gail Ghere, his wife, “David's life's mission was to be a bridge between students and the learning of history. He loved when students did well, when they got excited about learning and came into themselves as learners.” +

Contributions, large and small, are welcome! Please contact CEHD's development office at (612-625-1310), or online at <http://giving.umn.edu>, or University of Minnesota Foundation—CM-3854, PO Box 70870, Saint Paul, MN 55170. Please specify the David Ghere Memorial Fund for Student Professional Development (#8660).

A Living Legacy of Devotion: Liz and Carleton McCambridge



Liz and Carleton McCambridge are two loving people who are genuinely happy with their life choices. Liz had a creative career as a teacher. Carleton had a rewarding job as a technician providing essential medical equipment to specialists and patients in a hospital. Both of them enjoyed their work years and when they retired three years ago found much more to fuel their energy and passion.

Both Liz and Carleton grew up in families where education was highly prized. Liz's father was the first in his extended family to attend college and he became a much beloved professor at St. Thomas

Academy. Books, social consciousness, volunteerism, and religious values were an integral part of Liz's youth. Carleton's parents both were college graduates, and, even with a family of seven children, they sent all their kids to college.

Although Liz always wanted to be a teacher, she quit college the first time in 1971 because so few teaching jobs were available. She received certification as a nursing assistant in order to find gainful employment, but her dream of teaching endured and she returned to the University of Minnesota to complete coursework and graduate from the then College of Education in 1979. She persevered, and as a teacher she enjoyed teaching English as a second language (ESL) to junior high kids and also to adult immigrants in evening high school. At that time, Minnesota saw a large influx of Asian immigrants and Liz found creative ways to teach them. She taught at several schools in Saint Paul, where she brought enthusiasm and skill to teaching social studies and math classes as well as ESL. She earned a master's degree from Mankato State University. To this day, Liz treasures letters from admiring students. Years later, one of her students approached her at the State Fair and said, "Mrs. McCambridge, you saved my life!"

Carleton graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in elected studies—he had two majors, economics and art history. From

early on, he was fascinated with representational art and drew in his spare time. He studied Japanese in his postgraduate years. In his work in the medical field for 34 years, he witnessed the drama of life and death firsthand.

Today, Liz finds fulfillment in volunteer work with the Minnesota Literacy Council teaching ESL to adult immigrants. Carleton finds it in his renewed love of oil painting and fine art. His poignant paintings of nature and Native American lore warm the interior of their Craftsman bungalow in Minneapolis and his work has been exhibited at galleries in the Twin Cities and in Montana. Most recently, his work was exhibited at the ArtReach Gallery in Stillwater, Minnesota, through December 22, 2011.

Identifying the organizations they wish to support after they are gone has been a satisfying endeavor. They established the **Elizabeth and Carleton McCambridge Scholarship** as a bequest, with the Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning receiving 10 percent of their estate. This scholarship will "give people who may be left out the tools to succeed," Liz said. "We want to know that kids whose parents never went to college can have the opportunity to get a firm foundation in life. And we selected the PsTL program because we think they do an outstanding job serving kids who need educational opportunities." +

Barbara Hodne: College of Continuing Education Distinguished Educator 2011

PsTL teacher **Barbara Hodne** has had a direct impact on the teaching outcomes of 22 high school teachers, and indirectly on the education outcomes of hundreds of their students. For her highly regarded leadership, mentoring, and professional development, she was recognized with the CCE Distinguished Educator Award for 2011.

Barbara helped broaden the academic and demographic profile of high school students served by the College in the Schools (CIS) program. When area high school teachers identified gaps in

college readiness among their low-income students and students of color and asked to partner with College in the Schools, Barbara identified rigorous but supportive courses that would allow this fastest growing segment of students to be successful. Three University courses are offered in participating high schools: Writing, Mathematical Modeling and Predictions, and Physics by Inquiry.

Barbara has served as faculty coordinator and has developed teacher-support workshops through the Entry Point Project. These workshops integrate



multiple learning styles and target specific skills to foster success with a more diverse student body.

In "creating pathways to success for diligent, thoughtful students," hundreds of students find the rewards well worth the effort. +



ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY SAY HELLO TO POGIL:

The POGIL approach is aligned with PsTL's teaching and learning focus on transformational strategies for diverse learning environments.

this spring Associate Professor **Murray Jensen** received a two-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to support efforts to improve undergraduate anatomy and physiology teaching and learning through the use of POGIL strategies. NSF grants are intensely competitive, with an average approval of about 15 percent. **Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL)** emphasizes student-centered instruction through inquiry-based group activities.

Instead of the lecture approach, which Jensen calls “the sage on the stage,” POGIL benefits from the proven work in cognitive science and cooperative learning where students explore content, construct understanding, and apply acquired knowledge. This “guide on the side” model is optimal, says Jensen, “for a student-centered classroom to become an active learning environment. Such an inquiry-based model uses group learning to promote both the development of student process skills and a conceptual understanding of human anatomy and physiology.”

Jensen is the principal investigator and a believer in the social nature of knowledge. He urges professors to “get away from the podium.” This project is the first POGIL effort to focus on human anatomy and physiology, where students typically receive factual information to memorize, which results in fractured ideas and poor long-term understanding. The target student audience for POGIL materials attends community colleges and aims to work in healthcare and allied fields. POGIL activities focus on making certain that students understand concepts, learn to use process skills, and become adept at problem solving.

At an introductory POGIL workshop this past summer, 40 instructors from different institutions convened to learn the POGIL process and create activities for introductory anatomy

and physiology classes. Participants included high school teachers as well as college instructors.

A core group of eight anatomy/physiology educators from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin has begun to develop POGIL materials. This group has begun to pilot several POGIL activities, with an aim of developing 10 or 20 exercises for entry-level anatomy/physiology. Over the course of the two years, they will investigate the effectiveness of instructional approaches, collect data (via interviews, classroom observation, student feedback, and instructor feedback), evaluate the results on student learning and engagement, and publish to make the exercises available to the professional community across the country. Research results will be presented at the 2013 Human Anatomy and Physiology Society national conference alongside a set of workshops to introduce other instructors to POGIL.

In 2007 Jensen received the Outstanding Undergraduate Science Teacher Award from the Society for College Science Teachers, a division of the National Science Teachers Association. He was also the recipient of the Horace T. Morse University of Minnesota Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education in 2001. He has presented at professional conferences and published in biology journals.

Over the past decade, the national POGIL Project has brought together educators who wish to affect change within education, and to connect and support educators from all disciplines interested in implementing, improving, and studying student-centered pedagogies and learning environments. The national POGIL Project is supported by the National Science Foundation, the Department of Education, the Hach Scientific Foundation, and the Toyota USA Foundation. +



Anatomy/physiology educators at the first meeting of the POGIL development group. The core group is from Minneapolis Community and Technical College (Minneapolis), North Hennepin Community College (Brooklyn Park, MN), Southwest Minnesota State University (Marshall, MN), University of Wisconsin-Stout (Menomonie, WI), Wartburg College (Waverly, IA), and Milwaukee School of Engineering.



BRIDGING DIFFERENCES DEFINING COMMUNITY

Warren St. John: Building Community in a Changing America



In *Outcasts United*, Warren St. John discovered more than a female coaching soccer to refugee boys in Clarkston, Georgia. The book tells of the challenges of diversity in a changing America. In his presentation to PsTL's first-year students on

October 26, St. John observed that "refugee assimilation is a microcosm of the transitions happening in American communities," a "hyperspeed version, a time machine" that reflects the struggle many small towns face when there is an influx of ethnically diverse newcomers who look and dress differently, and speak little English.

From the mid-1990s, refugee families were resettled in Clarkston from countries, such as Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Kosovo, where repression, persecution, genocide, and displacement was occurring. Resettlement agencies found low-rent apartments with little thought to cultural or national affiliations. Refugee children had little in common. Soccer, however, was their universal language!

In 2002, Luma Mufleh, a college graduate, entrepreneur, YMCA girls' soccer coach, and Jordanian immigrant, drove into Clarkston to buy groceries at a Middle Eastern market. Making a wrong turn, she wound up at a housing project where she spotted barefoot boys playing soccer on asphalt, kicking a torn ball. Luma stopped. At age 31, searching for something meaningful to do with her life, she felt drawn to this scene.

Coach Luma took on the job of building a boys' soccer team, the Fugees, and, with it, an entire community. She insisted that

the boys follow her rules about studying, exercising, fair play, appearance, and behavior. Some players left. The standards she set gave the Fugees the self-respect and discipline to win. Due in great part to Coach Luma's leadership and perseverance, citizens of Clarkston eventually found some common ground.

"I felt a sense of discovery reporting this story. It was in real time. I hope that the story of the Fugees can open some minds to think differently about outsiders," said St. John.

Students posed many questions for him, among them the critical moments in writing this book, how he kept track of each interview, and how he maintained an objective focus.

Students were interested in St. John's approach to the writing process. "Know what you are going to say, write it, try it out. Discover what you really want to say by editing. If your rough first draft is bad that means you are doing it right." Last, St. John stressed that you revise and revise until it's perfect.

Luma Mufleh and the Fugees: Finding Purpose, Fighting Prejudices



On November 2, PsTL's first-year students listened to Luma Mufleh describe her passion. As a child in a wealthy Jordanian family, she attended private schools. Dissatisfied with the role of women in her country, she decided to attend college in

the United States and then remained, despite her parents' disapproval. Over the next few years, she moved around and worked a variety of jobs. She was missing a sense of purpose that meshed with her ideals. At age 31, Luma embarked on a



<< CEHD READS >>

Common Book



CEHDREADS

“Can one person make a difference?” is a theme for PsTL’s First-Year Inquiry (FYI) students. It flows through class discussions and projects, and is a linchpin for nurturing relationships among diverse students. All read a Common Book. The 2011 Common Book was *Outcasts United*, by Warren St. John, the true story of refugees from war-torn countries resettled in a small town in Georgia, and how soccer and a remarkable woman enabled them to unite across their differences, overcome their alienation, and succeed as a team, the Fugees.

journey that changed her life. And it all happened by accident.

Resettled refugees in Clarkston, Georgia, were outsiders in a strange land, and strangers to one another; some had been enemies in their homelands. What the refugee kids had in common was a love of soccer; they played with what they had (or did not have, such as a proper soccer ball, a playing field, proper shoes).

Luma Mufleh, who had been a soccer player and was a girls’ coach, became their coach. She fought for a field where they could play. Cooperation, teamwork, uniforms, equipment, game schedules, and transportation became critical issues. So did schoolwork, for which she organized tutoring before practice sessions. She dealt with prejudices, cultural rivalries, and basic needs, such as: driving refugee families to appointments; navigating social services; reading documents; organizing small businesses, such as an office cleaning service for women; and on occasion providing groceries. She became parent, teacher, mentor, friend, sibling, and advocate. The town authorities opposed the Fugees soccer team at almost every turn. These obstacles did not phase her or change her determination to build the Fugees into a formidable soccer team.

As an outsider herself, Coach Luma knew that the refugees did not want pity. “These kids were set up for failure,” she said, and “I saw potential and wanted to see them grow.” She set high standards for her players and for herself, and she led by example. She said that “the right thing to do [is] standing up for what you believe in. When people say you can’t do it, that’s the reason to do it.” She has no regrets. And, although she has not read *Outcasts United*, she is glad that refugee and immigration issues have been more widely discussed because of it.

Today, seven years later, the Fugees are a large family. There are soccer teams for refugee boys and girls, an after-school tutoring program, and an independent school for refugee youth, which is a national model. One of the original Fugees has graduated from college, and many others are attending college. Some former Fugees return for summer internships. Coach Luma hopes that the organization someday will endure with leadership from former Fugees.

The grand plan is to build a Fugees Academy as the first school for refugees in the nation, a world-class facility that will include classrooms, library, computer lab, gardens, health clinic, gym and soccer fields (www.fugeesfamily.org). +

Panel Discusses How Sports Build Communities

A panel discussion for FYI students on October 10 explored the ways sports can enrich individuals and communities. Panelists included Dr. Janice Hilliard, vice president of Community and Player Development for the NBA; Susie Miller, CEHD alum and founder of Minnesota Special Hockey; kinesiology professor Jo Ann Buysse; MSW student Salma Hussein, a participant in the Muslim women’s basketball program at the Brian Coyle Center; and Ted Kroeten, artistic director of Joy of the People, Twin Cities Community Soccer Center. This session enhanced the scope and breadth of students’ work with the Common Book, *Outcasts United*.



Students Study Community and Play Soccer

In October, FYI students experienced another way to expand their reading of *Outcasts United*—through the intersections of community and individuals. Students identified different aspects of TCF stadium and discussed why and how its design conveys and reinforces the University community and the residential and business areas it serves. Then, they played soccer on the field, worked collectively, and had fun! +



<< ENGAGING GLOBALLY >>

MICROFINANCE: Algebra Lessons Lead to Global Awareness

When first-year students have an interesting challenge and need to find a creative way to tackle it, they thrive. Students in the spring 2011 Learning Community (LC) linked a course on Mathematical Modeling and Prediction with one on Contemporary Literature: International Perspectives. The algebra course was taught by PsTL's Sue Staats and the world literature course was taught by PsTL's Renata Fitzpatrick. Students had to think about and act on becoming engaged global citizens through different perspectives studied in the LC. With the aid of their iPads (every first-year student in the College of Education and Human Development is given an iPad), they set out to make decisions about microfinance loans. This fall, Staats used the microfinance concept with a new group of mathematics students and the result was equally meaningful.

The Learning Community students approached various international issues, such as disparities in global well-being, education, search for identity, and gendered life opportunities. In the world literature class, students read and discussed novels, short stories, memoir, poetry, and film by contemporary authors who covered many contexts for understanding social justice through global issues, such as genocide, hunger, poverty, and disease. Students learned how to read data trends in the algebra class, where they compared information about the world's regions in mathematical forms, usually tables of values and graphs. By using algebraic analysis of such data, students gained an international perspective and furthered their engagement in global citizenship.

With one project, students worked in small groups to select entrepreneurs from developing countries who resonated with one of the characters or situations in their course readings. As Staats put it, they were to "choose a book character to honor someone who touched their hearts." Several groups chose Ishmael Beah, who wrote a memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, of his harsh childhood existence fleeing his village in Sierra Leone, wandering the countryside, often starving, and becoming a government soldier forced to use a gun and engage in deadly conflicts. Ishmael's was a personal journey to find his identity and regain his humanity through unbelievable struggles. Another choice was from *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, by Junot Diaz, which is a fictional story of an immigrant in the

United States from the Dominican Republic who lives with the cultural expectations and remnants of that country's political, social, and economic history. Students were able to invest in individuals by offering each a microloan that would help them attain some degree of upward economic or social mobility, provide for their families, build or expand a small business, or engage in helping their community. The students had a budget of US\$200 to invest. Their task was to select the individual, the sector, the country, and sort through other data, reach consensus, and send the microloan.

Microfinance is the process of lending to people who typically do not have access to normal financial channels and who request small loans to start or maintain a business enterprise. As a foundation for examining areas that focus on improving people's lives, students studied the **United National Millennium Development Goals**. Then they turned to a microlending website (kiva.org) and dug in to develop selection criteria and choose loan recipients. One loan went to a woman in Kenya, a 38-year-old mother of four and dairy farmer who wanted to build a zero-grazing unit and buy a chuff cutter. Another loan went to a person from Sierra Leone; another, to someone from the Dominican Republic. Microfinance applicants can receive multiple small loans from a variety of different sources.

With this challenge of reviewing, discussing, and collaborating, student teams exchanged ideas and values, partly from their own experience, partly from their readings, and partly from their analysis of data about international health and economic disparities. In the process, students were able to draw connections between their literary and math studies. Staats saw the microfinance exercise also as a "bonding experience for first-year students. Students in a Learning Community share tasks, reflect and discuss together, work on meaningful assignments, and see the relevance of their academic studies to a real-world situation."

One student wrote, "Being able to loan money to people who are in need was a very unique part of this class. Not only did we lend money to people in need, we tried to base it off of our findings in the MDG goals and our readings. We were able to apply information from both of our classes, which with a math and a literature class is hard to do." Another student wrote,



WE CAN END POVERTY 2015 MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

United National Millennium
Development Goals action plan
to improve people's lives by 2015:

- > End poverty and hunger
- > Universal primary education
- > Gender equality
- > Child health
- > Maternal health
- > Combat HIV/AIDS
- > Environmental sustainability
- > Global partnership

"We were able to explore the different financial situations of people in different countries. This really opened my eyes to the financial difficulties people face internationally. We even got a good majority of our loans already paid back!"

Online information on microfinance requestors and their specific needs is available from the kiva web site, including a history of repayment. Kiva.org manages the outgoing transfer of funds and the repayment of loans, the majority of which are fully repaid to the lender's account in approximately nine to twelve months at a rate, according to kiva.org, of 98.9 percent. Thus, an original loan, which can be as little as US\$25, once repaid, can be recycled indefinitely to others. Since kiva.org was founded in 2005, they have serviced loans for over 630,000 lenders, totaling US\$254 million in loans.

One of the students in this group wrote, "We came together as a community to choose another community to lend to. This felt very powerful because we were using our studies to change the world, in a sense." +

University's New President Hears About Microlending



President and Mrs. Kaler, surrounded by students, staff, and faculty

Students, faculty, and staff packed the Burton Hall atrium on September 21, 2011, to welcome the University's new president Eric Kaler and Mrs. Kaler. They joined a presentation titled, "Can algebra and world literature make a difference, together?" This topic, presented by Associate Professor Sue Staats and some students in her algebra class, focused on criteria for providing a microloan to an entrepreneur in a developing country. Students applied an analysis of international health and poverty data, with gendered and culturally based development needs in developing countries. They asked the president, "If the choice were yours, what region would you choose?" President Kaler's response indicated a preference for investing in infrastructure projects, although he recognized the "grinding poverty" in sub-Saharan Africa. He recommended that students think about a loan that would be "most impactful," e.g., weighing issues related to health. Yet, he agreed that the need is very strong in many developing countries. +



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.cehd.umn.edu/pstl
pstlpost@umn.edu
(612) 626-8705

If you are interested in talking to someone about setting up a gift or scholarship, please contact the development office at 612-625-1310.

PSTL RESEARCH SERIES COMING IN 2012:

February 9: "Is There an App for That?": Lessons from the First Year of the CEHD iPad Initiative (www.cehd.umn.edu/pstl).



p2
Graduate Studies



p6
A Living Legacy of Devotion:
Carleton and Liz McCambridge



p6
College in the Schools



p7
NSF Research Grant

For address correction, go to www.update.umn.edu or pstlpost@umn.edu. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Contact (612) 626-8705 for more information. The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

DESIGN AND EDITORIAL: Carr Creatives (www.carrcreatives.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY: Dawn Vilella, Jennifer Franko, Jill Trites, Susan Andre, Pete McCauley, and thanks to others who supplied photographs

PRODUCTION: Modern Press; printed on Mohawk Solutions 100% post-consumer, soy inks

