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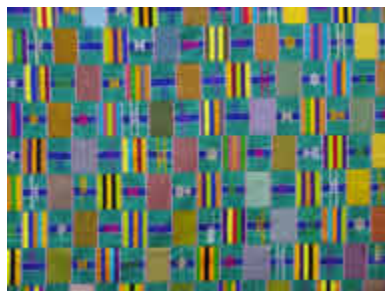
Skidmore Intercom

Faculty & Staff Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 2 - December 14, 2001

Welcome -- The Skidmore *Intercom* Faculty-Staff Newsletter is a production of the Office of College Relations. All members of the campus community are invited to submit story ideas or news items, using the contact information provided below. Department chairs and office directors are asked to please print a copy of this document to share with colleagues who do not have regular access to a computer.

We hope you enjoy this electronic newsletter and encourage you to share your impressions via email or telephone.



"Bobbo" on Campus — Schuylerville Central School students (right) work with Gilbert "Bobbo" Ahiagble to create kente cloth during an Expanding Horizons program. The multi-colored pattern in the cloth (left) is named for Akpedo, a Ghanaian vine whose name loosely translates to mean "unity." Art Historian Lisa Aronson purchased the cloth from Ahiagble and provided it to Skidmore's Intercultural Center. Ahiagble, a master kente cloth weaver from Ghana, was on campus in early December in connection with the "Africa Embodied" exhibition curated by Aronson's students.



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[UWW Reflects on Remarkable Year](#)[Chemist Receives Research Funds](#)[Philosopher Wins Prestigious Grants](#)**Vol. 1, No. 2 - December 14, 2001****UWW Director Reflects on Remarkable Year**

Bolstered by a half-million dollar grant that has enhanced distance-learning opportunities, Skidmore's University Without Walls marks its 30th year with increased enrollment and growing excitement about the future.

The announcement this summer of a \$460,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation of New York City sparked the development of three new baccalaureate-level distance-learning programs. By the end of the academic year, a total of 10 new courses will have been developed for three interdisciplinary programs: American History and Culture, Human Nature and Behavior, and Communication and the Arts. All three programs have been designed to be completed entirely over the Internet.

Equally exciting is the heightened activity in admissions that culminated this fall in the enrollment of 27 new students from the island nation of Antigua. UWW Director Corky Reinhart and a small team of staff members traveled to Antigua in late November to meet with prospective students interested in developing educational partnerships with Skidmore. The UWW crew returned after an intensive week of interviews, meetings, and informational sessions geared toward discerning and meeting the needs of a special group of new students.

Said Reinhart, "This new awareness and interest in our program is the result of some great events that came together just recently. We would not be able to serve the more than two dozen new students without the Sloan support -- it enables us to serve our online population in important ways. And it is because of the growth in online offerings that new students are attracted to UWW."

UWW is up to meeting the special challenges presented by the Antiguan students. All of the students from this region are professional teachers who have two-year degrees. For them to advance professionally, a bachelor's degree is required. As with many UWW students, the Antiguan students balance career and family needs while trying to advance their education. They sought admission to UWW because there are no four-year colleges located on the island.

Two recent UWW graduates with Antiguan connections have been instrumental in promoting the Skidmore program: Austin Josiah '90 is Antigua's labour commissioner and Colin Green '01 heads both the Antigua and the Caribbean Teachers Unions (which together have 40,000 members). An important issue for students from this region is the availability of financial aid. Both union and government officials assured Reinhart that they are supportive of the teachers' plans and will work to provide loans and other financial backing to students admitted to UWW.

Many of the new students will begin their studies in January. The majority of them are experienced early childhood teachers although the group includes a number of union leaders whose interests include political and policy issues.

Reinhart's enthusiasm over the new students is matched by his excitement for the new online courses that have been designed. He's especially proud of the quality of online discussions and research presented by students in a course titled "The West in Idea and Representation," taught by William Grant. The course has engaged its participants in exciting ways, with students providing a wealth of material and demonstrating sophisticated understanding of that material in their online discussions. Reinhart says, "To see students finding primary and secondary materials, evaluating and linking different sets of ideas, then you realize that they are not just reading history -- this is how historians work. This is how critical thinking works -- by studying different sources and different ideas, having one's ideas challenged, and being able to respond to those challenges."

At some future point, Reinhart hopes that distance learning opportunities will be made available to other Skidmore populations, such as regular students and alumni. He explains, "We would like to see exploration of the potential for both traditional and non-traditional students to use this tool. UWW grew out of one of Skidmore's earliest traditions of meeting students' needs with distinctive educational offerings. We are excited about continuing this tradition."

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Steve Frey, assistant professor of chemistry, has received a three-year grant of nearly \$50,000 from the Petroleum Research Fund for a project that might eventually help identify and/or remediate environmental toxins.

Frey's project, "Catalytic Hydrolysis of Phosphate Esters by La(III) Ion-Exchanged Hectorite Clay," evolved from collaborative research that a former student, Benjamin Hutchins '01, and Frey began during the fall of 1999. Frey has long been interested in metalloenzymes that catalyze the hydrolysis of DNA or proteins, a reaction that cleaves these molecules. He and student collaborators have synthesized a number of inorganic compounds as models for these enzymes.

The project that Frey and Hutchins embarked on represents a new branch of the research. They wanted to see if hectorite clay, a material that binds different kinds of metals, might be capable of catalyzing hydrolysis reactions in a way that is reminiscent of metalloenzymes. If so, this material might eventually be useful for identifying and/or detoxifying environmental toxins such as pesticides or chemical warfare agents, because such substances are susceptible to cleavage by hydrolysis.

Says Frey, "Indeed we were able to demonstrate that hectorite, bound with several different types of metals, was capable of hydrolyzing phosphate ester substrates (substrates that might be considered analogs for certain environmental toxins)." The goals of the project are to determine the optimum conditions for catalyzing hydrolysis reactions with the clay, and to work out the mechanistic details of these reactions. "While the project may ultimately lead to a useful application of this material, the work outlined in my proposal is fundamental in nature," Frey explained.

Hutchins spent four semesters and one summer (through Skidmore's Summer Collaborative Research Program) working with Frey on preliminary details. He has since graduated from Skidmore and gone on to graduate school at Penn State, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry. Frey also had help from Dana Hach '01, who is currently enrolled at the University of California at Irvine working toward a Ph.D. in biochemistry. His current collaborators are Teresa Schreiber '02, Greg Wurbel '02 and Brian Anderson '03.

The PRF funds will support Frey and two student collaborators for the next three summers; will fund the purchase of equipment, chemicals, and supplies; and will provide half of the cost of a new ultraviolet/visible absorption spectrophotometer.

According to Frey, "The success of my proposal was undoubtedly reinforced by the fact that Skidmore has agreed to provide \$25,000 in matching funds for the project, which will be used for room and board for the students and cover half the cost of the spectrophotometer. The willingness to provide matching funds underscores Skidmore's commitment to undergraduate research and the principle of linking theoretical with applied learning. This was most certainly an important consideration in PRF's decision to fund my proposal."

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Associate Professor of Philosophy Francisco Gonzalez has received both a Humboldt Research Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship to support sabbatical research on a book during 2002-03.

Gonzalez will write a book critically assessing the influential critique of Plato by the 20th-century German philosopher Martin Heidegger, with the aim of finding, in this confrontation between the beginning of the philosophical tradition and its self-proclaimed "end," an opportunity for reassessing the philosophical enterprise.

In Gonzalez's view, such a project is important for a number of reasons. He explains, "In this critique Heidegger, who is without question one of the most important and influential philosophers of the 20th century, challenges the entire philosophical tradition that was largely shaped by Plato. Second, this critique has been accepted by and has influenced many of those critics of the tradition who call themselves 'postmodernists'."

Gonzalez plans to show that there are profound affinities between Plato and Heidegger that Heidegger failed to see (and which undermine some aspects of Heidegger's critique of the philosophical tradition) and that there are equally profound differences that Heidegger failed to justify and that result in his rather disastrous severing of philosophy from ethics and social discourse.

He added, "What is ultimately at stake in the confrontation between Plato and Heidegger -- as a confrontation between the beginning and the self-proclaimed 'end' of the philosophical tradition -- is the very nature of the philosophical enterprise. A book on this topic has not been possible until now since the most relevant Heideggerian texts, consisting largely of courses Heidegger delivered during the 1920s, have been published only recently. A few have yet to be published, but for these, student transcripts are available in archives."

Both fellowships will provide support for Gonzalez's sabbatical leave. The Humboldt will enable him to spend six months at the University of Freiburg, Germany, and cover travel expenses. In addition, the Humboldt Fellowship also will open opportunities for future cooperation with German scholars by making Gonzalez eligible for other research grants, for travel support to conferences in Germany, and for funds to invite German scholars to come to Skidmore.

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Faculty-Staff Activities

Ralph Ciancio, professor emeritus of English, gave a presentation titled "Nabokov and the Educated Imagination" Nov. 29 to students, faculty, and friends of Wagner College.

David Domozych, professor of biology, completed a one-week mini-course titled "Microinjection techniques in cell biology" during the summer at the Marine Biology Labs, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. The comprehensive course dealt with micromanipulation, microinjection, and patch clamping of single cells.

Glenn Egelman, director of Health Services, has received the American Medical Association's Physician's Recognition Award (PRA) for a three-year period (2001 through 2004). The award recognizes physicians who voluntarily continue to expand their knowledge and improve their skills through education. Of the 700,000 practicing physicians who are eligible, about 60,000 receive PRA certificates each year. Awards are given for one, two, or three years to physicians who have accepted education as a basic responsibility of the profession of medicine.

Michael Ennis-McMillan, assistant professor of anthropology, was awarded a visiting research fellowship from the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California at San Diego, for the 2001-02 academic year. While in residence at the center, he is working on a book project on community-based water management and environmental health in Mexico.

Ennis-McMillan presented a paper, "La Vida del Pueblo: Women's Water Management during Mexico's Economic Crisis of the 1990s" at the conference "Rethinking Social Science Research on the Developing World in the 21st Century." Sponsored by the International Predissertation Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, the conference took place June 7-10, 2001, in Park City, Utah.

Francisco J. Gonzalez, associate professor of philosophy, presented two invited papers in Italy over the Thanksgiving break. At the Università degli Studi in Milan he presented a paper titled "Why Plato Had No Theory of Forms" and at the University of Pavia he presented a paper titled "Why Heidegger Found Plato's Dialectic an 'Embarrassment.'" Both papers will be published in Italian translation.

For the meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy Oct. 4-6 at Goucher College, Gonzalez delivered a paper titled "Why Heidegger's Hermeneutics is not a 'Dia-hermeneutics'."

During the summer he delivered a paper titled "Conversing about Virtue Everyday: Socratic Communication as End, Not Means," at a meeting of the International Association for Greek Philosophy Aug. 19-25 in Rhodes, Greece.

Last spring Gonzalez delivered comments on the topic of "Logos and the Essence of Technology" for the 35th annual North-American Heidegger Conference May 11-13 at Fordham University.

Anthony Holland, associate professor of music, was a guest conductor for the 2001 Area 10 New York School Music Association All-State Area Orchestra in a November concert at Hudson High School attended by more than 700 people.

Karl Mihalek, sergeant in Campus Safety, and **Priscilla Barry**, officer, were honored earlier this year by Saratoga Springs officials for their public safety work. Mihalek, a Saratoga Springs Police Department retiree, was recognized by Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Curley with an Exceptional Service Award. Barry, a Saratoga Springs firefighter who works part-time at Skidmore, was one of several department members recognized for their efforts in saving two people from a plane crash in 1998. The recognition day was sponsored by the city council.

Jack Ling, director of diversity and affirmative action, has given the following presentations:

Nov. 30, at Four Winds, Saratoga Springs, "A Systems Approach to the Understanding of Intergenerational Conflict Around Identity in Families of Asian, Latin Cultural Heritage." The presentation illustrated how failure to resolve certain conflicts between family members of different cultural roots may be located in the very way the family system maintains equilibrium, balance, or apparent stability. The program demonstrated the hidden costs of adaption and assimilation in the U.S. and offered several strategic and paradoxical ways of promoting communication and change in families locked in habitual conflicts.

Oct. 20, American Council on Education Conference in Cincinnati, a session titled "Race Case Study: Promoting Racial Inclusion," based on Skidmore's 1998 selection as one of 50 institutions chosen to spearhead President Clinton's campus-community dialogue on race. The presentation described the social barriers, interpersonal challenges, and personal successes experienced by members of three cultural-change organizations -- the local chapter of the NAACP, Saratogians for Equality and Against Discrimination, and the local Coalition on Race, a new multiracial organization of residents, business leaders, and other professionals. Ling highlighted both the failures and successful strategies used by the change agents.

Oct. 12, Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture at Boston College, a workshop titled "Asian-American Identity and Experience Within a Black-White Paradigm." The focus was the teaching of interdisciplinary Asian-American studies courses in an educational and social environment that has and still considers race and culture matters in terms of a black-and-white paradigm. Ling examined the specific challenges and pedagogical strategies related to the teaching of Asian-American identity development and politics.

Bernard Possidente, professor of biology, presented a paper titled "Genetic Variation Among Inbred Mouse Strains for Circadian Activity Rhythm Period" in July at the Behavior Genetics Society Meetings in Cambridge, England. Co-presenters were Jennifer Wishnow, Susan Kurr, and Felicia Gomez, all Class of '02.

Jeff Segrave, professor of exercise science and chair, Department of Exercise Science, Dance, and Athletics, gave a lecture, "Toward a (Cosmo)politics of the Winter Olympic Games" Dec. 6 at the University of Utah as part of that institution's 2001-02 lecture series on the History and Culture of the Olympic Games. The series is co-sponsored by the university, The Salt Lake Tribune, the Utah Humanities Council, the Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation, and the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation.

Mason Stokes, assistant professor of English, delivered a paper at the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University, where he is currently a Fellow. His presentation was titled "Straight, No Chaser: Harlem, Heterosexuality, and the 1920s."

John J. Thomas, professor of geology, attended a Dec. 7 luncheon in Albany, where he was honored for his "long and outstanding service" to the New York Conference of the American Association of University Professors (NYSC-AAUP). Thomas joined the conference in 1968 and has served on the executive committee, as the treasurer, and on several committees. He continues as a member of the conference's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Conference President Frank Higman presented Thomas with a gift and a resolution of recognition passed at the fall meeting of the NYSC-AAUP.

Thomas and **Kimberly A. Marsella** of Skidmore's Geosciences Department attended the annual meetings of the Geological Society of America Nov. 5 in Boston. Marsella gave a talk titled "Increasing Student Engagement in Geomorphology Through the Use of the World Wide Web," describing how she used the web to enhance her teaching in GE 304, Geomorphology, last spring. Thomas talked on "Strategies for Involving Students in a Large Introductory Course," describing lecture techniques that he has developed with the help of Teaching Associates **Karin Kirk '90** and Marsella. His alumnae/i who attended the presentation commented that they were "time-warped" back to GE 101. Additionally Karin Kirk '90 and Meredith Higbie '01 presented papers on their recent research.

Susan Zappen, associate college librarian for collections, moderated the Capital District Library Council's Coordinated Collection Development Committee Autumn 2001 program, "Solutions to Serials Problems: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?" Nov. 20. On Oct. 31, she presented a paper, "Serials Management: The Good News," at the 2001 annual Charleston Conference.

Publications & Compositions

David Domozych, professor of biology, published a paper titled "Composition and synthesis of the pectin and protein components of the cell wall of *Closterium acerosum* (Chlorophyta)" in the "Cell and Molecular Biology Section" of the *Journal of Phycology*, Vol. 37, 2001. Co-authors are Skidmore graduates Ariella Baylson and Brian Stevens, both Class of '00.

Michael C. Ennis-McMillan, assistant professor of anthropology, published "Suffering from Water: Social Origins of Bodily Distress in a Mexican Community" in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly: An International Journal for the Analysis of Health*, Vol. 15, No. 3, September 2001. The journal is a publication of the Society for Medical Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association.

Denise Evert, assistant professor of psychology, published a research study titled "Selective attentional processing and the right hemisphere: Effects of aging and alcoholism," in the current issue of *Neuropsychology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, 2001.

Barry Goldensohn, professor of English, is the author of "Post Mortem as Angels," a poem to appear in *The Poet's Portable Workshop*, to be published in 2003 by Harcourt College Publishers/Heinle & Heinle Publishing.

Francisco Gonzalez, associate professor of philosophy, is the author of an article, "Socrates on Loving One's Own: A Traditional Conception of Philia Radically Transformed," appearing in *Classical Philology* 95 (2000).

Anthony Holland, associate professor of music, collaborated on the original music soundtrack for "Mr. Dreyfuss Goes to Washington," a docudrama starring Richard Dreyfuss that aired Nov. 26 on the History Channel. Holland's collaborator was Michael Kamen, a five-time Grammy Award-winning composer.

Bernard Possidente, professor of biology, contributed an article, "Genetic Mapping: I Map, Therefore I Am" to the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery catalog for the exhibition "The World According to the Most Exact and Recent Observations: Mapping Art and Science," edited by Susan Bender and Ian Berry and published this year by Skidmore.

In addition, Possidente and **Augustus Lumia**, associate professor emeritus of psychology, have had three papers accepted describing neurobiological aspects of a rat animal model for anabolic steroid abuse. The papers report on research funded by the National Institutes of Health to develop a rat animal model for neurobiological effects of anabolic steroid abuse. Citations are as follows: "Effects of Withdrawal from AAS on Hormonal and Behavioral Variables," in press, *Physiology & Behavior*, 2002 (co-author is M.Y. McGinnis); "Physical Provocation Potentiates Aggression in Rats Receiving Anabolic Androgenic Steroids," in press, *Hormones and Behavior*, 2002 (co-authors are M.Y. McGinnis and M.E. Breuer, Skidmore Class of '98); and "Aggression in male rats receiving anabolic steroids: Effects of Social and Environmental Provocation" in press, *Hormones and Behavior*, 2002 (co-authors are M.Y. McGinnis and M.E. Breuer).

Jay Rogoff has had his second full-length book of poetry, *How We Came to Stand on That Shore*, accepted by River City Publishing for publication late in 2002.

He has also had several poems published recently, including "Still Life" in *The Southern Review*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter 2001); "Flopping the Negative" in *Rattapallax*, No. 5 (Spring 2001); "Captivity in Spring" in *Partisan Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Spring 2001); "The Ark" in *The Southern Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer 2001); and "The Hildesheim Doors" in *The Progressive*, Vol. 65, No. 12 (December 2001). Other poems accepted for publication include "Adagio," "Chaconne," "Serenade," "Sonnambula," and "Translated" by Ballet Review, "Death in Waiting" by The Comstock Review, "The Glass of Fashion and the Mold of Form" by *The Paris Review*, and "Mennonites by the Sea" by *The Southern Review*.

Rogoff's essay-review "Two Poets' Poets," on *Lifelines: Selected Poems 1950-1999* by Philip Booth and *The Flashboat: Poems Collected and Reclaimed* by Jane Cooper, appeared in *Shenandoah*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Spring 2001). His essay on Kenneth Branagh's film of Hamlet, "A Little Touch of Larry in the Night," appeared in *The*

Mississippi Review's special Hamlet issue, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer 2001), and was singled out in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* on-line feature about that issue.

Susan Zappen, associate college librarian for collections, is the author of "Portals: More than Journals and Databases Survey Questions and Responses" in *The 2000 Charleston Proceedings: Is Bigger Better?*, edited by Rosann Bazirjian and Vicky Speck and published by Against the Grain Press.

This is the last issue of *Intercom* for the fall semester. Publication will resume in January 2002. See you in the new year!

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