

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SUMMER SESSION ADMINISTRATORS
NEWSLETTER

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From the President

What did you expect? My first official act as your new president was to send out the evaluations evaluations from two years ago. You cannot blame it on looking backward. Instead, it was a case of not looking at all!

That will not be the case on March 9 when the officers of WASSA meet in

Seattle to plan next October's conference. The evaluations those of you returned will help us plan our best conference ever. If you have not returned your evaluation, please do so or call me, or, better yet, show up on the 9th (at your own expense) and we will all plan the conference together.

NAASS Conference a Great Success

Under the leadership of President **Jil Warn** (University of California, San

Diego) and VicePresident **Norm Watt** (University of British Columbia) the postponed NAASS Conference in Charleston went smoothly and efficiently. Although total numbers were affected adversely by the delay, attendance was good at all sessions, and substitute panellists, in spite of the November to January 21 postponement, were at a minimum. There was much physical evidence of the destructiveness of Hurricane Hugo downed trees, blue plastic

covers on many roofs, and quite a bit of scaffolding. But the city was running normally and Charleston citizens lived up to their excellent reputation for hospitality.

All in attendance were inspired and awed by a video, "The Women of Summer," of the 1921-1938 Bryn Mawr program for nontraditional students. Esther Peterson, an instructor in the program over fifty years ago, presented brilliant commentary and exhorted summer session directors to strive for greatness, to take risks, and to remain optimistic in the face of adversity. As she described the early days of the program, her love for the downtrodden and disadvantaged

always showed through. NAASS directors, some with tears in their eyes, inspired by her example, recommitted themselves to summer programs of

service. It was the most moving conference presentation in many years.

The keynote presentation by **John Denison** (British Columbia) on ethical issues in summer sessions was excellent. Denison asserted that ethical standards do apply to academia. Using a case study approach, he described several situations which required ethical judgments for decisionmaking. Then the plenary session divided into small groups to simulate the decisionmaking process. Solutions proposed by summer directors, caught in case study dilemmas, ranged from copping out, assigning the decisionmaking power to someone else (a provost or a dean), and stubbornly maintaining ethical positions which probably spelled doom for their summer sessions. Some avoided overriding ethical positions and made decisions using political criteria only. Denison's presentation illustrated a truism: successful summer session directors make less than perfect decisions ethically and must then take the heat which comes from both sides the uncompromising Puritans and the

nonethical politicians. Denison noted that the job of running a summer session is by nature a hard one; he also noted that most directors love the job.

A session on the legal issues involved in summer sessions gained much comment. Andy Abrams, Vice president for Legal Affairs of the College of

Charleston, and Violet Towne, Director of the Center for Training and Professional Development at SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome, gave a fascinating presentation, and warned summer directors that the pitfalls are many and the road to salvation narrow. A review of some real situations created twofold reactions among the rapt summer directors. Some thought, "I've got to get out of this summer director business before I get caught in a massive liability suit." Another noted, "It's worth it. As Esther Peterson said, the job of summer director is one of the best and most effective jobs one could have. But I will be careful."

The table talk after the meeting brought up a few do's and don'ts:

- * Don't let the possible legal liability strangle your creativeness
- * Don't promise specific results from classes (avoid statements such as, "You will be conversing like a Luzon native at the close of this Tagalog class")
- * Don't promise equipment or materials that may not be present or delivered
- * Don't give an instructor an ironbound contract if there's a possibility you are going to cancel the class
- * If you expect extras from your professors, mention the extras in the contract.

Patricia Thrash, Executive Director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Learning of the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges gave the assembled summer directors some illuminating insights into the accreditation procedures used and reminded directors that quality is the program ingredient *sine qua non*. Thrash noted that there was a lack of specific reference to summer quality in many accreditations.

Other WASSA attendees at the conference included five from UCLA. **Gary Penders** and **Bruce Thompson** each chaired important sessions New Administrator's Workshop and Research and Publications. British Columbia counted three at the conference, and Arizona, Idaho State, Portland, Portland State, and Western Oregon each sent two delegates. Also represented were: California San Diego, Cal State San Bernadino, Evergreen, Hawaii, Northern Colorado, Oregon, Pacific Lutheran, and San Diego State. All told, WASSA

was represented by 28 delegates.

The WASSA conference planning committee for 1990 is considering a session on legal issues in the Seattle meeting in October.

Catalog Committee Makes Annual Call

Sandra Willcox, chair of the WASSA Catalog Committee, has put out the first "call for catalogs."

Sending your catalog to Sandra serves two purposes: it provides members of the committee with material for the catalog workshop at the annual meeting, and it makes your bulletin eligible for the 1990 Charlie Award, which recognizes institutions whose bulletins are judged best by the committee.

Send four copies of your 1990 bulletin to:

Sandra Willcox

Center for Continuing Education and Summer Programs

University of Montana

Missoula, MT 59812

Please send yours as soon as it is available. (This is not the WASSA catalog service, see page 4.)

Ah, California

It is summer year round in California, especially in January. That is the view of summer sessions personnel at schools on the semester calendar in the California State University system. For three weeks each January, more than 12,000 students enroll in these minisummer sessions.

In 1974, the California Legislature passed legislation making the concept of "special sessions" a part of the State Education Code. Under certain

circumstances, campuses could offer resident credit outside the traditional fall, spring, and summer modes. However, guidelines for implementation were not issued by the system's chancellor's office until the early 1980's.

San Diego State University had been offering a very few extension courses in business over the winter break during much of the 1970's and early 1980's. No more than 150 students took these classes. With the issuance of the special sessions guidelines, they began offering resident credit seven years ago. When they began paying the summer session salary rate instead of the extension scale, more business courses were offered. Other departments slowly began to wake up to the value of serving their students, especially in the overcrowded GE courses, and faculty saw an opportunity to earn summer money during winter.

This past January more than 3,400 students took 10,200 student credit hours in 140 sections. This makes the SDSU Winter session, as it is called, larger than any one of the individual sessions during summer.

What about the legitimacy of three week classes? Can material be adequately covered during this period? Can learning really take place? The Council of Deans at SDSU and a committee of the Academic Senate reviewed the courses last fall and urged closer scrutiny of offerings, but stated that departments and colleges were the best determinants of what should be offered.

Winter session has not hurt summer enrollments. Last summer's enrollments hit an alltime high. The reason for these high enrollments can best be explained by the cartoon character featured on the SDSU Winter session bulletin last year. The character tells his friends that he is getting off the six

year study plan by attending the Winter session.

Have Uniforms Will Travel

By now, you should have received your First Annual CANAM Volleyball Tournament "uniform." Banff, Alberta was the site of the actionpacked

tournament which featured four teams. They experienced all that sports teams can: confusion by the owners, coaching changes, player trades, bad calls by the referee (**Larry Cobb**), player injuries (**Bill McDougall** went down in the first game but offseason therapy will have him back for next year), the agony of winning and the humiliation of defeat.

Trophies were awarded the winning and losing teams and, in the tradition of modern media, the second and third place teams were totally ignored. Winning and losing team captains, **Ron Pribble** of Oregon Institute of Technology and **Debbie Bird** of Oregon State University, accepted the trophies which follow WASSA tradition plastic loving cups made in Hong Kong mounted on a base of solid South American balsa.

No details are available on the athletic competition to be scheduled for the 1990 conference in Seattle but the self appointment of a new commissioner will, no doubt, clarify the choice of sport.

Why were the Tshirts six months late in arriving? Addressed to Calgary, the shirts travelled from Palo Alto to San Jose to Winnipeg and back to San Jose they never did see Calgary.

WASSA Catalog Service

Charlie White continues to offer the catalog evaluation process he introduced more than a decade ago. If you would like to have your 1990 summer bulletin evaluated, Charlie invites you to submit it to the WASSA Catalog Service. A \$35 evaluation fee is charged. Your bulletin is returned filled with incisive comments written in the margins. The bulletins are returned at the annual meeting or mailed on request. (This is not the WASSA annual "call for catalogs," see page 2.)

To take advantage of the review, please send two copies of your bulletin and a check for \$35, made payable to WASSA Catalog Service, to Charles M. White, PSU Summer Session, PO Box 751, Portland, OR, 97207. Please send your bulletins by August 15.

Special Thanks

Go to **Paul Bradley**, **Larry Cobb** and **Charles M. White** for contributing articles to this issue of the *WASSA Newsletter*.

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