



Education Program Annual Report 2006-2007

Date: June 1, 2007
To: Ed Yeterian, Dean of Faculty
From: Mark Tappan, Chair
Re: Education Program Annual Report

1. PARTICIPATING FACULTY

Program Faculty:

Karen Barnhardt, Assistant Professor of Education
Lyn Brown, Professor of Education and Human Development
Martha Denney, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Education
Karen Kusiak, Assistant Professor of Education
Mark Tappan, Professor of Education and Human Development and Chair

Affiliated Faculty:

Kirstin Edelglass, Jan Plan Faculty
Tarja Raag, Associate Professor of Psychology

2. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, 2006-2007

During the fall semester we offered nine courses. These include eight courses in our program and one course, ED 257: Educational Psychology, taught by Tarja Raag in the Psychology Department. All nine of these courses have been taught before, and represent regular and long-standing features of our curriculum: ED 121-Introduction to the History of US Education (Kusiak); ED 215-Children and Adolescents in Schools and Society (Tappan); ED 231-Teaching for Social Justice (Tappan); ED 235-Revolutionary Multiculturalism (Barnhardt); PS/ED 257-Educational Psychology (Raag); ED 315: US Environmental Justice Issues (Barnhardt); ED 332-Women, Girls, and the Cultures of Education (Brown); ED 431-Curriculum and Methods (Kusiak); and ED 433-Senior Student Teaching Practicum (Kusiak). One note about ED 121, taught by Karen Kusiak-it was offered for the first time in the Fall of 2005; it was so successful that we have made it a regular part of our curriculum (enabling first year students to take one of our courses during their first semester at Colby, if they are so inclined).

During Jan Plan we offered four courses: ED 197-Ecological Teaching and Learning (Kristen Edelglass); ED 351-Practicum in Education (Tappan); ED 355-Urban/Multicultural Practicum (Tappan); and ED 437-Senior Student Teaching Practicum (Kusiak). Continuing a tradition began in January 2006, five students enrolled in ED 355 spent the entire month working at the Gaston College Preparatory Academy in Gaston, NC, a KIPP school directed by Caleb Dolan (Colby '96).

During the spring semester we offered seven courses. Five of these courses have been taught before, and represent regular and long-standing features of our curriculum: ED/WG 217-Boys to Men (Tappan); ED

231–Teaching for Social Justice (Tappan); ED 336–American Education (Barnhardt); ED 493A–Senior Seminar in Education and Human Development (Tappan), and ED 493B–Senior Seminar in Environmental Education (Barnhardt). Two courses were new this year: ED 236–Ethnography of Education: Case Studies from Africa, taught by Martha Denney (and designed, as well, to contribute to the curriculum in African Studies); and ED 398–The Politics of Educational Reform, taught by Karen Barnhardt. Both of these courses were quite successful, and will be offered again as part of our program curriculum.

Our program continues to play a major role in the Civic Engagement initiative at Colby, under the auspices of the Goldfarb Center. Students are responsible for completing civic engagement projects in a significant number of our courses, including ED 215; WG/ED 217; ED 231, ED 332, ED 351/355, ED 493A, and ED 493B. In addition, our program continues to support the Colby Cares about Kids Mentoring Program. Mark Tappan serves as a member of the Civic Engagement Committee for the Goldfarb Center, and as a member of the CCAK Advisory Committee, responsible for training, mentor reflection sessions, and evaluation. Finally, our program continues responsibility for overseeing the America Reads/America Counts program for the College.

In terms of other activities this year, our program helped sponsor the visit of Mama Dolfine Gumba Dawa Oliech, founder of the Korando Faith Widows and Orphans Group in Kenya, to campus in September. We also sponsored an information session for prospective minors and majors in April, and a joint Colloquium on Research in Education and a Panel on Careers in Education and Human Development in May, as part of the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

3. STUDENT ADVISING

The core program faculty has been responsible for advising the Education, Environmental Education, Human Development, and Professional Certification minors and the Independent Majors in Human Development that we have had in the program this year. This advising is largely informal and ad hoc. Rather than move to a more systematic procedure, we have decided to maintain the somewhat informal system that has evolved over the past decade or so within the structure of our program. Mark Tappan is primarily responsible for advising the students majoring and minoring in Education and Human Development; Karen Barnhardt is primarily responsible for advising students minoring in Environmental Education; and Karen Kusiak works most closely with students seeking professional certification. This system is not set in stone, however, and students are free to seek advice from any faculty member(s) they choose.

All of the program faculty, in conjunction with Cindy Parker and Cate Ashton in Career Services, do a significant amount of career and graduate school advising—the most common questions concern options for graduate school and ways in which students can obtain elementary and secondary teaching certificates after they graduate from Colby.

4. CLASS OF 2007

The Class of 2007 contained **11 Education** minors; **4 Human Development** minors; **2 Environmental Education** minors; and **5 Professional Certification** minors—for a total of **22** graduating minors.

11 students graduated with an **Independent Major in Human Development** (one of our largest, and strongest, academically, cohorts ever). One of these students (Anne Wachtel) is headed to a post-bac program to prepare to enter graduate school in nursing next Spring. The rest are planning to teach or work full-time next year.

In terms of honors and awards, **Anne Wachtel** graduated with Honors in Human Development (our first), after completing an excellent thesis entitled 'A little child shall lead them': Education and cultural identity destruction in the great 'civilizing' of Indian Country. In addition, we are particularly proud that five of our

minors or majors—**Megan Bovill, Natalie Ginsburg, Kate Haswell, Marissa Meyer, and Ryan Weaver**—have accepted Teach for America assignments next year. And, finally, four of our seniors **Megan Bovill** (Human Development) **Kate Haswell** (Sociology, Education minor), **Lauren Oliff** (Human Development), and **Anne Wachtel** (Human Development) were elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

5. DIVERSITY RELATED ACTIVITIES

Because of our program’s explicit commitment to social justice we consider virtually all of our efforts, both in and outside the classroom, to be in support of the College’s ongoing diversity initiative:

The Education Program is guided by John Dewey’s distinction between “education as a function of society,” where the function of education is to prepare the minds of the young to maintain and uphold the basic principles of society, and “society as a function of education,” where the function of education is to remake or reform society, because the principles and directives that govern society, and support the status quo, are by and large unjust. We firmly embrace the latter perspective, and thus our program is explicitly committed to promoting **social justice**, both in schools and in society at large. Our courses explore the impact of cultural assumptions, societal norms, and institutional policies and practices on both individuals and groups. Students and faculty work together to examine the operation of power as it relates to the construction of knowledge and the preservation of privilege. In so doing, students are encouraged to analyze and critique the intended and unintended oppressions resulting from specific educational and institutional practices by (1) considering the values and politics that pervade educational institutions, as well as the more pragmatic issues of teaching and organizing schools; (2) asking critical questions about how taken-for-granted assumptions and conventions about theory and practice came to be, and who in society benefits from such assumptions; (3) attending to differences in gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, and ability that result in political, social, economic, and educational marginalization and inequality, particularly for children and youth; (4) examining the connections among sexism, racism, classism, and other forms of oppression as they relate to environmental and ecological concerns; and (5) investigating how schooling plays a crucial role in the development of attitudes and behaviors toward “nature” and the environment. Students are also encouraged to move beyond critique and to theorize about the creation and implementation of educational and institutional practices that promote greater social justice and equity in society as a whole. (**Colby College Catalogue, 2006-2007**)

Some specific examples of work conducted by program faculty in support of social justice at Colby during the 2006-2007 academic year include:

- Mark Tappan served as member and Chair of the Race and Racism committee, continuing the work of previous Program members on this committee, Lyn Brown and Karen Barnhardt.
- Mark Tappan served as a member of the campus-wide Diversity Concerns Group.
- Mark Tappan served as a member of the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program Faculty.
- Both Karen Barnhardt and Mark Tappan served as Faculty Allies.
- Karen Barnhardt continued her very important work in support of ALANA and International Students as an Faculty Resident. This included serving as the Faculty Advisor to SOBHU, and providing informal counsel and support to many students.
- The program continued to provide a home and support for *The untold story: The history of activism and social justice at Colby* (<http://www.colby.edu/education/activism/>).

As always, we search for ways to attract more students of color and international students to our program. But we also believe our mission to promote social justice in schools and society at large also includes interrupting privilege and raising the consciousness of members of dominant social identity groups—which we continue to do at every opportunity.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The primary challenge of this year came as a result of the move to the new Diamond Building in the middle of the year. We survived, however, and we look forward to completing the process of furnishing our seminar room and office space this summer. This year also witnessed the decision of the Psychology Department to bracket Educational Psychology for the foreseeable future. The loss of that course will adversely affect our curriculum, but we will look for ways to adjust and compensate. With these challenges behind us we look forward to a productive and successful 2007-2008.

We will be undertaking a search for a tenure track faculty member to replace Karen Barnhardt (2007-2008 will be her last year at Colby). That will be an important, but time-consuming endeavor. In the meantime we will again be at full-strength faculty-wise, and student interest in our program continues to be high.

Nevertheless, we will continue to seek ways to increase the visibility of our program on campus, particularly the Environmental Education minor. Students and faculty in the program will also continue their work with the Civic Engagement initiative, the Goldfarb Center, the Colby Cares About Kids program, America Reads/America Count, as well as the College's ongoing Diversity Initiative.

In conclusion, as always, we appreciate the support, assistance, and encouragement we have received from all members of the Colby community, particularly the Dean of Faculty's office.