



Education Program Annual Report 2007-2008

Date: June 1, 2008
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
Brett Pierce, Jan Plan Faculty

2. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, 2007-2008

During the fall semester we offered eight courses. Seven of these courses have been taught before, and represent regular features of our curriculum: ED 215–Children and Adolescents in Schools and Society (Tappan); ED 231–Teaching for Social Justice (Tappan); ED 235–Revolutionary Multiculturalism (Barnhardt); ED 339: Politics of Educational Reform (Barnhardt); ED 431–Curriculum and Methods (Kusiak); ED 433–Senior Student Teaching Practicum (Kusiak); and ED 493A–Senior Seminar in Education and Human Development (Tappan). One course, ED 397: Girls, Popular Culture, and Schooling (Brown) was a trial run of a course that focused on the ways in which investment in popular culture shapes girls' identities, their relationships, and their school experiences. As such, it replaced ED 332: Women, Girls, and the Cultures of Education.

During Jan Plan we offered five courses: ED 118–Ecological Teaching and Learning (Kristen Edelglass); ED 197–Media for Social Justice (Brett Pierce); ED 351–Practicum in Education (Barnhardt); ED 355–Social Justice Practicum (Tappan); and ED 437–Senior Student Teaching Practicum (Kusiak). Continuing a tradition began in January 2006, four 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 six courses. All six of these courses have been taught before, and represent regular features of our curriculum: ED 112–Comparative Education (Martha Denney); ED/WG 217–Boys to Men (Tappan); ED 231–Teaching for Social Justice (Tappan); ED 336–American Education (Barnhardt); ED 374–Teaching Students with Special Needs in Regular Classrooms (Kusiak); and ED 493B–Senior Seminar in Environmental Education (Barnhardt).

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 351, ED 355, ED 374, ED 397, 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, in conjunction with the Goldfarb Center, and under the direction of Karen Kusiak, hosted a Conference on Teacher Leadership in November. In March we co-sponsored Jane Elliott's visit to campus. And in April we co-sponsored Mama Dolfine Gumba Dawa Oliech's return visit to campus. We also held our second annual Colloquium on Research in Education in Human Development and 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 the staff of 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 2008

The Class of 2007 contained **15 Education** minors; **6 Human Development** minors; **1 Environmental Education** minors; and **3 Professional Certification** minors—for a total of **25** graduating minors.

Four students graduated with an **Independent Major in Human Development**. One of these students, Emily Fogg, is heading to the Peace Corps, while another, Heidi Donahue, is teaching math at a private girls school outside Boston. The other two graduates are still looking for employment as of this writing.

In terms of honors and awards, **four** of our seniors **Sara Benjamin** (Sociology, Education minor), **Heidi Donahue** (Human Development), **Michelle Easton** (Human Development), and **Sharon Fuller** (Biology, Professional Certification Minor) 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, 2007-2008**)

Some specific examples of work conducted by program faculty in support of social justice at Colby during the 2007-2008 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.
- Lyn Brown and Mark Tappan both served as a member of the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program Faculty.
- Both Karen Barhardt 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 was to hire a replacement for Karen Barnhardt, who is leaving our program after eight dedicated years of service. We conducted a national tenure track search this fall, and brought two exceptionally strong candidates to campus as finalists: Adam Howard and Kathy Hytten. Ultimately we offered the position to Adam, and he accepted. Adam arrives in Waterville on July 1, and he

will hit the ground running in September, teaching two courses, including our Senior Seminar. We are very excited to have Adam re-join our faculty (he served as a faculty fellow during the 2003-2004 academic year), and we know that our program will benefit greatly from the new energy and enthusiasm that he will bring.

Student interest in our program (including the Independent Major in Human Development) remains high. We are grateful for that, of course, but we need to make sure that we are not stretched too thin. Otherwise, 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.