

## News

## LOTS enriches learning with untraditional methods

Margaret O'Driscoll  
Pilot design editor

If learning only took place from a desk in a stuffy classroom without any discussion, would you want to learn more? Perhaps you soak in knowledge better over a cup of coffee or in a heated debate? It may not be well known, but the solutions to these questions can be found here at GWU.

Seven years ago, a group of GWU faculty generated an idea over casual conversation to increase academic awareness across campus. The result: Year Of The Scholar, or YOTS as it is commonly referred to.

The idea behind YOTS was to attempt a one-year program that would promote academic scholarship outside of the traditional classroom setting. "We wanted this program to encourage students and faculty to increase the academic atmosphere in an informal way," said Joyce Brown, professor of English.

From this program, GWU now has several academic endeavors such as lecture series, lunch discussions, the GW Review (an undergraduate



Photo by Joy Marinelli

Acoustic Fusion band members, Ezra Edgerton (left) and Dale Rucker played at the Broadriver Coffee Co. sponsored by Life of the Scholar (LOTS), an organization of professors who want to see more activities provided for the campus.

scholarly journal published on campus), and the scholarship showcase.

One of the most successful programs from its beginning was the film festival series. Faculty and students would meet to view and discuss cultural movies that differ from the norm. Due to the lack of funding, the film festival is no

longer a part of YOTS, but a film course has emerged because of it.

Administration has budgeted a small fund for the Year of the Scholar program and faculty members are hopeful that they will continue in this support.

Recently, the name YOTS was changed to Life of the

Scholar, or LOTS, after several faculty members decided there was a need for a new name. Originally, the program was to last only a year, but due to its success has lasted for consecutive years.

"There are 'lots' of things you can do to enhance scholarship," said Leslie Brown, professor of Biology and founder

of the YOTS program.

One of the problems faced by faculty promoting LOTS is publicity and event attendance. Flyers, newsletters, and faculty e-mails are used to inform students of LOTS events and the entire student body is welcomed to participate.

"We want the athlete who may be interested in reading Gap Creek as well as those who are religiously and academically inclined," said Joyce Brown.

Another program associated with LOTS was started when Tom English was a professor at Gardner-Webb. The Scholarship Showcase is an event to promote interest and appreciation for scholarly work. This year the Showcase will be held on March 28, in Ritch Banquet Hall. Professor Tamara Cox is coordinating the showcase this year.

"Students benefit from this program through the exposure they receive from friends and faculty members to different levels of scholarship," said Cox. The showcase allows students to display and discuss scholarly work they have done throughout the year, as well as read chosen pieces aloud during a colloquium.

## Travel endowment allows English students to attend conferences

Monica Houser  
Pilot ad manager

Traveling to conferences will be a little easier for English students in the future, thanks to the Gravett-Johnson Professional Travel Endowment Fund.

Darlene Gravett, a professor of English and dean of the Graduate School of English, recently set up this fund to defray the costs of professional travel by undergraduate and graduate English students.

Professional travel constitutes travel to meetings and conferences, such as the Sigma Tau Delta conference, where seniors Kelli Edmonds, Anna Moose and Abby Wolford presented papers March 13-16. These three students were the first to utilize this fund, set up in Dec. 2001.

**"This is a great opportunity to allow students to participate in [the traveling] aspect of scholarly life."**

**Gayle Price**

"I am really glad [the English department] gave me the money. I wouldn't have been able to go otherwise," said Wolford.

Gravett established this fund in memory of her parents, Arthur W. and Nadine M. Johnson.

"I decided that this would be the best way I could honor

my parents and help students at the same time," she said.

The fund, which uses the interest drawn from the actual gift, will be available indefinitely, and the English department faculty will determine recipients.

"We want this to be a competitive thing, allowing students to apply yearly and selecting the most deserving," said Gravett.

Gravett also added that the English department has had many strong students in the past that the faculty wanted to see present papers, but there was never any money available to help them.

"This is a great opportunity to allow students to participate in [the traveling] aspect of scholarly life," said Gayle Price, chair of the English department.

## GWU Christian environment

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As a non-Christian at a Christian school, Rothem has wondered why the school has continued its religious affiliation.

"I don't know why Gardner-Webb feels obligated to be a 'Christian' university. Does it get money from religious groups?" He asked.

Gil Blackburn, vice president and dean of academic affairs, affirmed that Gardner-Webb does indeed receive financial aid from the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. He estimated that the school's day program receives around \$1 million a year. He also stated that the Divinity School receives about \$250,000 a year.

Blackburn clarified, however, that Gardner-Webb is not religiously affiliated in order to receive financial help.

"Gardner-Webb was estab-

lished by two Baptist associations to provide education under a Christian foundation," Blackburn continued. "We see education incomplete without the Christian dimension."

Despite conflicting beliefs as to what the spiritual focus of GWU should and should not be, Tracy Jessup, minister to the University, summed up what he believes makes Gardner-Webb a Christian university.

"[A Christian university occurs] when Christ is at the core of who you are and what you do as an institution rather than an addendum to who you are and what you do," said Jessup. "It is not a title you add on—it is something that revolutionizes our lives and total being."