

2-11-2010

The Troubadour, Issue 128 (February 11, 2010)

Cardinal Stritch University

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Recommended Citation

Cardinal Stritch University, "The Troubadour, Issue 128 (February 11, 2010)" (2010). *Troubadour*. 123.
<https://digitalcommons.stritch.edu/troubadour/123>

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THE TROUBADOUR

FEBRUARY 11, 2010

ISSUE 128

PILOT ROUND OF TALKING CIRCLES TAKES PLACE

Everyone's story is important; everyone's story matters. Listening to someone's story and telling your own is a wonderful way to build friendships, heal the wounds of misunderstanding and encourage solidarity.

For this reason, a pilot program of talking and listening sessions called Talking Circles has begun at Stritch. Justice Janine Geske (ret.), distinguished professor of law and director of restorative justice at Marquette University Law School, facilitated two pilot Talking Circles, one on Monday, Feb. 1, and another on Thursday, Feb. 4.

The two pilot sessions provided the opportunity for participants from every part of the University community to share and hear personal feelings, stories and thoughts on our recent past. Participants were then invited to reflect on one simple but practical step they would take to make Stritch a better place for students. Individual stories and reflections were shared in confidence with the group, but the tone of each Circle reflected a heartfelt passion, commitment and desire for Stritch to be a vibrant, united community.

Each pilot group was composed of 23 members, among them faculty, staff, administration, Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, and trustees. The diversity of the group was very important, and participants represented not only every part of the University, but diversity of age, years of service, experience and perspective.

Geske's role was important to these pilot Taking Circles, but her schedule does not afford us the opportunity to keep her involved if we move beyond the pilot stage. Five faculty members and two staff members who participated in these two pilot sessions will meet with Geske by conference call on Monday afternoon to discuss the possibility of expanding the Talking Circles and their potential role as future facilitators. We will work together with her to guide our next steps as we evaluate moving forward on our own.

Watch for more information on these Talking Circles in future editions of The Troubadour.



Photo Credit: Red Thunderbird Agency (Scott Frazier / talking stick)

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

Program review and assessment of student learning is important

At Cardinal Stritch University, we must continue as we have in the past to find ways to ensure that our students are learning what we want them to learn, and that our programs are effective in meeting the mission of the University. It is through the continuation of these processes of program review and assessment of student learning, aggressively initiated within the University several decades ago, that we establish our success and ensure that students are receiving the best possible educational experience. A consistent effort was formalized in 2000, with a statement of philosophy approved by Faculty Senate:

“Cardinal Stritch University aims to sustain and improve programs in all areas within the institution. Informed by the Franciscan tradition, assessment efforts are student-centered to ensure that the goals, environment, management, and outcomes of the University provide the best opportunity to achieve the desired liberal arts education.”

Over the next few months, we will continue University-wide discussions on assessment of student learning, program review and establishing pathways, processes and systems to ensure that our programs are strong and our students are learning what we want them to learn. I anticipate that the plan will proceed along the following paths:

- ♦ A University team attended the workshop on Feb. 3-5, 2010 of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association on assessment of student learning to bring most current practices to the University.
- ♦ The University Assessment Committee is preparing a number of initiatives in the coming weeks, including a survey of the status of program and course assessment throughout the University to revitalize a “culture of assessment.”
- ♦ Several groups, including the Assessment Committee, will begin immediately to review the recommendations from our last visit of the HLC.
- ♦ The University Assessment Committee will review our assessment plan following the work of the 2000 Assessment Committee and propose implementation of a plan that can continue to assess student learning across the University.
- ♦ Review of the department annual reporting process is underway as a potential tool for reporting program evaluation as well as student learning.
- ♦ Format, criteria and timeline are being developed to establish meaningful program review throughout the University, providing the types of evidence that might be used to establish what a successful program looks like. The criteria are the first steps in the implementation of program review processes. The process and timeline for program review will be described later but is intended to encompass all areas of the University.

Much has been done and is being done throughout the University to assess student learning. These efforts are recognized as we continue these processes in the next few months, refining, cultivating and institutionalizing the assessment of student learning for the future. Now, using this foundation we will build and expand program review in the hopes of creating routine processes that will lead us to continued success with quality, student-oriented programming.



UPCOMING EVENTS

"The Magician's Nephew"

**Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 13 and 14
2 p.m., Nancy Kendall Theater**

Tickets: \$5. To order, call ext. 4171

A highly theatrical adaptation of a C.S. Lewis classic, "The Magician's Nephew" recounts the adventures of Young Digory and his friend Polly through mythical kingdoms and enchanted lands, including Narnia, the land of the great lion, the evil witch and talking animals. This is a play that encompasses realism and fantasy, interesting characters, humor and lyrical beauty, enhancement and suspense and should delight audiences of all ages.

Faculty Chamber Recital

Monday, Feb. 22

7 p.m., Nancy Kendall Theater

Free admission

The Music Department will present a program of chamber music performed by Stritch faculty members Dr. James Norden, piano; Kay Belich, mezzo-soprano; Olga Tuzhilkov, viola; and featuring guest artist William Helmers, clarinet and member of the MSO. Works by W.A. Mozart, Brahms and Spohr.

**Back to School Conference:
Mental Health Issues and
Early Childhood Education
Thursday, Feb. 25**

8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

City Center, 1037 W. McKinley Ave.

Cost: \$50 per person

This event focuses on the extreme concern expressed by community entities and educators over issues of violence, anger and depression escalating in early childhood classrooms across Milwaukee. To view a full schedule of the day's events and register by Feb. 18, visit www.stritch.edu/backtoschool.

Wisdom at Work:

**Strategic Planning/Developing Plans
and Using Resources Efficiently**

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

1-4 p.m., Board Room

Facilitators: Michael Dickmann, Ph.D.

Peter Jonas, Ph.D.

This workshop will explore strategic planning as a process that facilitates communication about organizational direction and goals, while further shaping and advancing the mission of the organization. Such planning involves clarification of purpose, assessment of status, focusing of priorities, alignment of strategy and actions, and monitoring of progress. Learn more about the five guiding questions that form the backbone of the process.

THE TROUBADOUR

The Troubadour supports the overall mission, goals and objectives of Cardinal Stritch University, and is meant to serve as a communications tool for the campus community. If you have feedback or story ideas, please contact Public Relations at prdept@stritch.edu.

For complete information on University public relations, media relations and publications, please see the PR brochure, which is available in My Stritch by clicking on "Public Relations Information" in the "Other Employee Info Pages" folder under the "Employee Info" tab.



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