Cal U — China Connection

Cal U professors in Educational Administration & Leadership are connecting with China. Silvia Braidic and Kevin Lordon have established an online Professional Learning Community (PLC) with professors at Hebei University in Baoding, China. Lordon says the PLC continues work started by Dan Engstrom (Cal’s Interim Student Teaching Director) when he taught in China. Lordon and Engstrom partnered on teaching and leadership lectures. Lordon continued to work with professors at Hebei University, and he and Braidic created the PLC. Braidic noted that new information technologies, like Skype and Wikis, provided avenues to create the PLC. With Skype they communicate face-to-face on the PLC’s topics: teamwork, lesson planning, and student assessment. They created a China PLC Wiki to share resources (articles, PowerPoints, discussion boards) for the Skype sessions. The Wiki gives the PLC virtual collaboration.

Braidic and Lordon noted some challenges. In China, only the professor can impact knowledge. Written and oral exams predominate, but large class sizes require adjustments in assessments. The Hebei professors teach English, but the Cal profs had to learn to pace their speech for clear communication. To deal with the time difference both sides adjusted work schedules. At 7a.m. local time the Cal professors meet with their Chinese colleagues at 8p.m. in Baoding.

Below, PLC members from Hebei University participate in a session with Cal professors Braidic and Lordon.

Faculty & Students Study Wetlands

Robert Whyte and Carol Bocetti (Biological & Environmental Sciences) will work with Joseph Holomuzki (Ohio State University) this summer to study herbicide use impacts in Lake Erie coastal wetlands. The OSU project will fund two Cal U student field technicians. Whyte and Bocetti continue work they started in 2007 with funding from FPDC and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The past work supported research by five Cal students, including Mark Lazaran and Chris Villella who presented their research last November at the Regional Science Consortium Annual Meeting at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie, PA. Mark will continue his studies next year as an OSU graduate student.

Cal student field technicians, Chris Villella and Mark Lazaran (on ladder), study birds above the tall vegetation in the Old Woman Creek Wetland near Huron, Ohio.

Student Orientation Leaders in Cal’s Welcome Center, inspired by the spirit of Cal U for Life, conducted a Secret Santa in December for the family of one leader whose family lost everything in a fire in their home over Thanksgiving. The leaders experienced the impact of the "Just Give a Dollar" event at New Student Convocation and thought a Secret Santa would be a perfect example of giving. The student leaders gave the family nearly $500 to help with recovery process. Several Student Orientation Leaders plan to help the family this spring with plastering, painting and general renovation work on the home.
Faculty Achievements

Aref AL-Khattar (Justice, Law & Society) presented a paper and chaired two sessions at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting in San Diego in February.

Mark Aune & Madeline Smith (English) and Paul Crawford (History & Political Science) facilitate a monthly Scholars’ Circle to inspire junior faculty to do research with senior faculty mentors.

David Argent (Biological & Environmental Sciences) published: Paddlefish restoration to the upper Ohio and Allegheny River systems of PA and NY (Paddlefish Management, Propagation, & Conservation in the 21st Century, 2009), Fish assemblage connectivity in the Monongahela River Basin (Northeastern Naturalist, 2009) and Stream Fish Community Responses to a Gradient of Specific Conductance (Water, Air, and Soil Pollution, 2010). Research by Argent and emeritus professor William Kimmel was featured in Enhancing and Conserving PA’s Diverse Natural Heritage for Future Generations (PA Fish & Boat Commission, 2010).


Dorothy Campbell & Pamela Bondi Cignetti (Emeriti), Beverly Melenyzer, Diane Nettles, and Richard Wyman (Elementary/Early Childhood Education) had How to Develop A Professional Portfolio: A Manual for Teachers (5th edition) released in January.


Barbara Hess (Mathematics & Computer Science) presented Using Videotaped Scenarios to Teach Liberal Arts Mathematics at the Mathematics Association of America Conference in January.

Raymond Hsieh’s (Justice, Law & Society) second book; Cognitive Mapping & Comparison- An Example of Online Legal Polices was published in Germany.

Laura Hummell (Applied Engineering & Technology) was named to the PA Technology Student Association (TSA) Board of Directors in January. Hummell and Dan Engstrom (Student Teaching) hosted the Regional TSA Conference at Cal U this month.

Diane Nettles & Holly Diehl (Elementary/Early Childhood Education) published their book; Powerful Strategies for Comprehension Instruction: It Takes More than Mentioning!

Michele Pagen (Theatre & Dance) led 13 Cal students to the North Central Regional Conference, Auditions & Technical Interviews in January at Muskingum University in Ohio. Over 240 students participated. Cal U’s students interviewed with 12 companies.

Christine Patti and Silvia Braidic (Educational Administration & Leadership) became PA Department of Education-trained program reviewers. Also, they were invited to become Quality Matters K-12 Online School Program reviewers, and Patti helped develop the 2010 Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning in February.

Mary Popovich (Health Sciences) became the first female mayor of West Newton, Pennsylvania in January.

Ryan Sittler (Library Services) co-authored Practical Pedagogy for Library Instructors: 17 Innovative Strategies to Improve Student Learning and The Library Instruction Cookbook; the latter was nominated for the Association of College and Research Librarians’ Rockman Publication of the Year Award.

Emily Sweitzer (Justice, Law & Society) presented Understanding Parental Abuse at the National Head Start Parent Conference in San Jose in December.

Taunya Tinsley (Counselor Education) co-authored Guidelines for counselors working with people of African ancestry in a sport context (Journal of Psychology in Africa, 2009)

Carole Waterhouse (English) is participating in Detecting Women, a PA Humanities Council-sponsored review of novels by women for insights into the changing roles of women in society.

Steve Whitehead (Applied Engineering & Technology) and Graphics & Multimedia students presented Benjamin Saves the Books to Rostraver Elementary School students in December.


The Barry Hunter Memorial Scholarship Fund, endowed with donations from faculty, former students, and others, will start to award competitive scholarships to biology students for research. Hunter was a Cal U biology professor.

Accreditation

- The Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering re-accredited Cal U’s Industrial Technology program and its Nanofabrication Manufacturing Technology Concentration (Applied Engineering & Technology) through 2015 with full compliance on all standards.
- Cal U’s Applied Sociology program (Justice, Law & Society) received full re-accreditation from the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology.
- 82% of Cal U’s programs are accredited by agencies recognized by PASSHE (18 of 22 programs).
Recent Grant Awards

Mike Amrhein (National Center for Robotics Engineering & Technology Education), $225,000, PASSHE Entrepreneurial Leadership Center for ELC/SI @ Cal U: Building Character-Building Careers to provide education and incubator services to promote economic development and entrepreneurship at Cal U.

Laura Hummell (Applied Engineering & Technology), $9,270, National Science Foundation, for TECH Awareness, a summer STEM camp for high school girls, and an F1 teacher workshop.

Ayanna Lyles (Health Science), $714, PA Department of Education for Incorporating Multicultural Education into Your Curriculum to help PASSHE faculty incorporate multicultural education.

Marta McClintock-Comeaux (Justice, Law & Society), $2,000, Frederick Douglass Institute for Expanding the Diversity of the Women’s Studies Program.

Gwen Perry-Burney (Social Work) & Harrison Pinckney (Earth Sciences), $2,000, Keystone Project for Cal U Men United: A Focus Group with Men of Color to study challenges to, assistance for, and benefits of earning a college degree.

Anthony Pyzdrowski (Mathematics & Computer Science), $6,671, Center for the Advancement of STEM Education for CASE Pre-Engineering Modules to improve STEM education.

Katherine Weber & Laura Hummell (Applied Engineering & Technology), $4,050, American Association of University Women for California STEM Initiative-Engaging & Inspiring Girls to Explore Their World to address barriers between females and STEM disciplines.

Mentoring Improves Retention
Cal’s mentoring program currently engages 706 volunteer student mentors and 939 student protégés and includes every academic department. Karen Posa, director of the University-Wide Mentoring Program, reports retention rates are 13.5% higher for freshmen with mentors compared to freshmen without mentors. In the past three years the retention rate for freshmen with mentors was 82.75%.

Supplemental Instruction
Cal’s Office of Student Retention & Success developed Supplemental Instruction review sessions for students enrolled in difficult classes. A graduate assistant works closely with the class professor and leads the sessions. Paul Crawford (History & Political Science) and Angela Bloomquist (Psychology) participated in pilot testing over the past year. In all cases, Supplemental Instruction helped increase the mean final grades of the students who participated compared to those who did not.

Earth Science Student Award
Cal U students in the Southwest PA Chapter of the American Meteorological Society (Earth Sciences, pictured below) received the AMS National Student Chapter of the Year Award. The chapter was on the AMS Honor Roll the past two years and was the 2007 National Weather Association Chapter of the Year. The chapter delivers weather presentations to schools, conducts StormFest with the Carnegie Science Center, and hosts speakers from the National Drought Mitigation Center, the National Weather Service, and others. The chapter president is Mike DeFino; Chad Kauffman is faculty advisor.

State Farm Insurance Supports CALNAT
Beverly Melenyzer (Elementary/Early Childhood Education) secured $25,000 from State Farm Insurance to continue the Cal U Network for Accomplished Teaching. CALNAT helps teachers pursue National Board Teacher Certification. The teachers also serve as Cooperating Teachers for Cal U’s teacher candidates. In the photo (right), Melenyzer (left) and Dean Kevin Koury (right) receive a check from Mr. Douglas Griffith, the State Farm Insurance liaison for CALNAT. In the photo below, CALNAT’s National Board Certified Teachers pose with a “thank you State Farm” sign with handprints from their students. This is Melenyzer’s fourth State Farm Insurance grant for CALNAT.
Internship Center News

Ashley Rathway (Marketing) is Cal’s third Late Show with David Letterman intern. Cal has intern opportunities with NBC Universal and Fox Network, too.

Cal’s Internship Center and Sport Management program held a sports careers fair (photo, right) during a Collaborating, Networking & Building a Sports Career event that featured 14 employers, including the Pittsburgh Steelers and Penguins. Over 200 students participated.

MSN GO Program Starts Strong

Cal U’s latest Global Online program, the Master of Science in Nursing, began this semester. Mary O’Connor, Coordinator, says the first cohort has 32 students, including individuals from a variety of nursing and healthcare-related professions. One student is a U.S. Army Major stationed in Baghdad, Iraq. Some employers include Cigna Healthcare, Forbes Regional, HealthSouth, Jefferson, Magee Women’s, Manor Care, Montgomery General, Paoli, Ruby Memorial, Uniontown, UPMC-Presby, and West Penn-Allegheny.

Diane Vasil, a Nurse Case Management Specialist and Bariatric Nurse at Cigna Healthcare, is a student in the new Cal U MSN GO program.

From Cal U to the National Football League

Barry McGlumphy (Exercise Science & Health Promotion) reported several Cal U alumni recently hired by NFL teams: Joe Sheehan (‘07), head trainer, Cleveland Browns; Joe O’pella (‘09), assistant trainer, Philadelphia Eagles; Mark Lovatt (‘05), assistant strength & conditioning coordinator, Green Bay Packers; Reggie Scott (‘07) head trainer, St. Louis Rams; & Gordon Williams (‘06) assistant trainer, Cleveland Browns. More than 50 Cal Exercise Science and Athletic Training alumni currently work in professional sports, including the NFL, MLB, NHL, NBA, and MLS.

Nu Omicron, Cal’s student chapter of Kappa Omicron Nu (KON), a national honor society for human science majors, received KON’s Outstanding Chapter Award. Below, Nu Omicron students and their faculty pose with President Armenti and Dean Koury to mark their achievement. The chapter’s faculty advisor is Joni Roh (Exercise Science & Sport Studies). Rebecca Hess (Health Science) is the Undergraduate Research Community Coordinator.