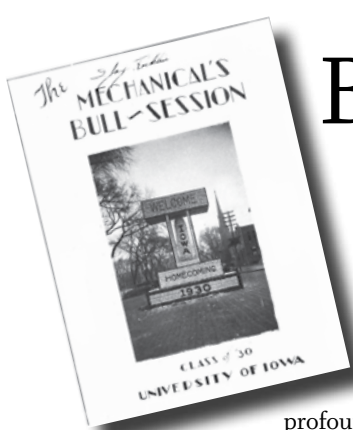


TALK

A Newsletter
from the
Center for
Teaching



Blueprint for Hard Times

The Great Depression was a stunning and profound chapter in our country's short history, a cautionary tale whose personal narratives and visual images are seared into our collective psyche. In many important respects, today's economic trials differ from those of the 1930s, and we can only hope that the lessons from those earlier days will help us avoid a similar downturn. Nevertheless, college students and universities already are feeling the impact.

When the stock market crashed on October 24, 1929, no one could have predicted the magnitude or the duration of the hard times ahead. Indeed, like their peers across the country, the class of 1930 at The University of Iowa graduated with fond memories and high hopes.

For the next eight years, the mechanical engineers of the UI Class of 1930 wrote annual letters to each other that chronicled their fears, failures, dreams, and successes. Each year, one member of the class typed the letters onto blueprint paper, printed and bound multiple copies, and sent the volumes—known as “The Mechanical’s Bull Session”—to his fellow contributors.

Despite the precipitous stock market decline, the newly minted engineers managed to find work or enter graduate school, and although acknowledging the economic downturn, they

were generally optimistic.

“We surely were dumped on the world at a time when it was tough sledding, saying the least. By living through this business depression I am sure that we have learned many a valuable lesson, and that we trained fundamentally for the great period of re-organization which is soon to come. Things are looking up, let’s go!”—*Wallace Nelson, December 1930*

In later editions, optimism became harder to muster as the “business depression” became The Great Depression. But the charming personal narratives also reveal initiative, perseverance, creativity, and humor in the face of tough odds.

Now housed in the University of Iowa Archives, Dept. of Special Collections (Mechanical’s Bull Session Collection, RG 02.03.43), the bound letters open an enticing window into the minds of one group of young college graduates of the time. With graceful and eloquent prose, the “Mechanicals” documented their activities, quoted their favorite literature, analyzed their predicaments, compared their progress, and reflected deeply on their lives and the world around them.

Students today face their own uncertain times. The Depression-era letters bridge the decades to provide insights about how an earlier generation of UI graduates used their “smarts” and applied sheer force of will to stake their place in a difficult world.

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Transforming Students

You and your students can read seven editions of the “Mechanical’s Bull Session” in their original blueprint form at <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/eng/mechanicals-bull-session.htm>. —Jean C. Florman

A New Team

This semester, the Center for Teaching welcomed four new graduate assistants to our staff. In addition to preparing teaching workshops for the spring, they also have contributed to several projects and responded to requests for taping classroom teaching.

Yeon Kyeong Kim, Ph.D. candidate in Journalism and Mass Communication

Rob Starkins, Ph.D. candidate in History

Minkyu Sung, Ph.D. candidate in Communication Studies

Abby Tibbetts, Ph.D. program in Higher Education

Springing into Action

Center for Teaching spring semester workshops will address an array of topics including:

- ✓ problem-based learning
- ✓ diversity in the classroom
- ✓ student motivation across the semester
- ✓ cross-cultural teaching styles
- ✓ teaching portfolios and philosophies

4CAST '09

ITS-Instructional Services, the Center for Teaching, and the University of Iowa Libraries are again hosting our popular 4CAST event, which will explore the use and impact of teaching technologies that enable “The Open Academy: Who Owns Knowledge?”

Designed for faculty and staff members who teach, the daylong event will be held in University Capitol Centre 2520 on Friday, January 16, starting at 8:45 a.m. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

For more information and to register, visit the Center for Teaching web site at www.centeach.uiowa.edu.

Eric Mazur—On a Computer Near You

During a two-day visit to the UI campus, Eric Mazur, Balkanski Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Harvard University, presented four addresses, workshops on teaching and learning, and a talk on his research in optical physics. Thanks to the efforts of UITV and ITS-Instructional Services, three of his addresses, “Memorization or Understanding: Are We Teaching the Right Thing?,” “Peer Instruction Workshop,” and “How the Mind Tricks Us: Visualization and Visual Illusions” are now available as online videos at <http://at.its.uiowa.edu/digimedia/mazur.shtml>. UITV also is airing the talks, which are available on DVD from the Center for Teaching lending library.

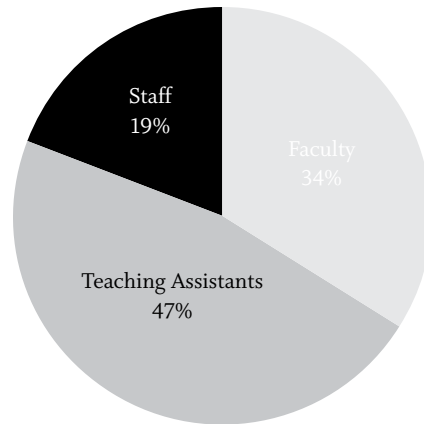


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Keeping Us Out of Trouble

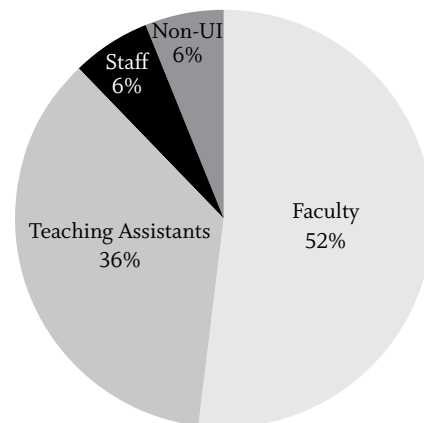
Campus-wide Workshop Participation
Fall 2008

During the fall semester, the Center for Teaching presented 26 workshops that were attended by 729 participants. Nine workshops (represented by pie chart) were open to all instructors on campus. Seventeen workshops were requested by individual departments.



Consultations
Fall 2008

As part of its mission, the Center for Teaching also offers confidential consultations with any instructor upon request.



The 2008 floods created opportunities to think differently about teaching. I had to develop new ways to engage the students while also considering the disruptions in their learning environment. The ITS SITA [Student Instructional Technology Assistants] program helped me set up a wiki for collaboration and idea exchange.

The unintended outcome has been hearing from all of the students, not just the ones who typically talk in class. The wiki has encouraged all of them to demonstrate their understanding and insights, and I have been delighted to learn how much they know and how deeply they think.

—Mary Adamek, Director of the Music Therapy Program. Since the June flood, School of Music faculty and staff members and students have been dispersed among 17 different office and teaching locations on campus and in the community. The School of Art and Art History and Department of Theatre Arts have suffered a similar fate.

A Different Perspective—The Iowa Engagement Corps

On their way to discovering Iowa, 18 intrepid members of the 2008 Faculty Engagement Corps toured Iowa's first LEED-certified building, a small-town high school, and a Quaker home once used as a stop on the Underground Railroad. They also visited the hometowns of Wyatt Earp, Simon Estes, and James Van Allen; and came to know and better appreciate the beauty and vibrancy of Iowa's landscape and people.

Soon-to-be-Provost Wallace Loh flew in from Seattle to join the faculty members as they experienced Iowa life beyond Iowa City. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and organized by the Office of University Relations, the May 29-31 tour swung through Pella, Centerville, Ottumwa, and Mt. Pleasant.

Contact Mary Geraghty Kenyon for information about next year's tour, which will take place May 20-22 and travel to west-central and southwest Iowa.

Speaking of technology

Our web site (www.centeach.uiowa.edu) continues to expand and provide new and interactive teaching resources. Visit the center's virtual version to:

- find an online catalogue of our library resources accessible by author, title, or topic;
- read current and past issues of the TALK newsletter and the center's workshop posters;
- discover our workshop handouts;
- contribute to the Center for Teaching blog site, Teaching Talk 2.0.

Coming soon—video clips of lively teaching moments on campus.

Actual and projected percentages for enrollment in all degree-granting postsecondary institutions by race/ethnicity
(includes 4-year, 2-year, public, and private)

	White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Unknown
1976	82.6	9.4	3.5	1.8	0.7	2.0
2005	65.7	12.7	10.8	6.5	1.0	3.3
2010	63.9	13.1	11.6	6.6	1.1	3.7

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). Table 22: Actual and projected numbers for enrollment in all degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity: Fall 1990 through fall 2015. Retrieved on September 24, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/tables/table_22.asp?referrer=report.

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Fostering Student Success

As part of the Office of the Provost, the Center for Teaching will welcome George D. Kuh to campus April 22-23. Founder of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice, Kuh is widely known for his influential research on the assessment of undergraduate student success and institutional performance. He is the Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education and Director, Center for Post-secondary Research, Indiana University.

While at Iowa, Kuh will present "Nothing Succeeds Like Success: The Classroom as the Foundation for Student Success." He will consider ways that faculty members, in partnership with student affairs professionals and others, can fashion a rich, engaging classroom experience that complements the University's academic values and fosters student success.

Join us for the presentation and reception.

Wednesday, April 22, 3:30-5:00, with a reception to follow.

Pomerantz Center C-20