

# Academic Affairs Report

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

MAY 2010

## Nazareth COLLEGE

### TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

That time of year has arrived, once again, when a flurry of emails, invitations and posters begin to appear, each announcing the public presentation and display of student research. These announcements and posters are intriguing and tempting, but only rarely can the time be found to attend. Research may not be the first image that comes to mind when thinking about Nazareth College, but it is very much present and a part of the richness of the experience that we offer students.

Research and creative discovery—in all their many forms—have always been an integral part of higher education, even at institutions where teaching is the primary focus of faculty time and responsibility. It is part of the preparatory activity of virtu-

ally every faculty member who teaches within higher education. And it is an important component of the student experience. For example, research and/or creative activity are common capstone experiences for many graduate and undergraduate students. At Nazareth students engage in research activity in a variety of contexts and at a variety of different levels. Many of the unique strengths of Nazareth are captured and revealed in the types of interaction that are involved in the research experience.

This final issue for 2009/2010 of the Academic Affairs Report is dedicated in large part to the collective display of the widespread (if somewhat isolated and scattered) efforts to support and nurture student research at Nazareth. The

underlying premise throughout is that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. Hopefully, even this small display (which is not meant to be exhaustive) of the collection will give a better sense of the nature of the activities that are occurring than does the serial display of the individual efforts. The questions that will frame this issue include: What is research? Why do we do it? What are the benefits for students? What are the benefits for faculty? What are the benefits for the institution and the broader community as well? And finally, to what extent (and in what ways) might it vary across the disciplines?

[Click for examples of this year's student research.](#)

### FACULTY AND UNDERGRAD STUDENT RESEARCH

Sometimes an assignment in class can lead to much bigger things. Several students from **Kim McGann's** (Sociology) Marriage and Families course collaborated with her to analyze a longitudinal dataset of Match.com profiles that had been collected through class assignments over the past three years. One of those

students, junior sociology major Dave Sanchez, conducted his own independent analysis and was accepted to present his findings in the undergraduate poster session at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting in Boston over spring break.

*(Continued on page 8)*



*Dave Sanchez (Sociology '11) and Kim McGann during the Undergraduate Poster Session at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Mtg. in March*

#### Inside this issue:

What is Research?	2
Research in Philosophy, Social Work & Psychology	2
Schedule of Events	3
2010 Interfaith Understanding Conference	3
Updates	4/5/6
2010 Scholarship and Innovation Grants Awarded	6
Research in the Disciplines: Art	7
Research in the Disciplines: Science and Mathematics	7
From the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence	8

## WHAT IS RESEARCH?

**What is research? Why do we do it? Why do we ask our students to do it?**

The answer to this question varies depending on who you ask, the context in which they teach and their discipline. The Council for Undergraduate Research defines it as “An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.”

Undergraduate student research, in particular, is increasingly being touted as a high impact pedagogical practice that provides benefits to students as well as faculty. Students learn by doing; they learn to work collaboratively, gain experience solving real world problems, as well as acquiring the tools of analysis and communication that are unique to a discipline. Faculty who become involved with student research especially report that although it in-

volves a considerable amount of extra work, it can also be very rewarding. In fact, when the issue of the added work can be resolved, it is at institutions like Nazareth—where teaching is the larger proportion of faculty workloads—that sharing the mysteries and joys of research and discovery in their disciplines with students is especially likely to provide faculty with new energy and allow them to explore the potential synergy between research and teaching in manageable and productive ways.

Although members of the natural science faculty have been involved with undergraduate research for years, in the spring of 2009, a small interdisciplinary delegation of Nazareth faculty attended the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Conference as a team that included representatives from Sociology/Anthropology, Arts Education, Chemistry, Social Work and Philosophy. Their goal was to learn about,

collectively reflect on, and explore the formal model of undergraduate student research as presented by CUR as a starting point for discussion across all disciplines at Nazareth College.

Within the sciences, models for doing student research are fairly well established, many of which can be very costly. But there is considerably less agreement within the arts and humanities.

Nevertheless, and increasingly, schools are looking to integrate research activity into the learning experiences they provide students at every level. What follows are descriptions of how it happens at Nazareth, as well as what it entails from disciplines where one might least expect it. Theses stories and descriptions are meant to illustrate the range of activity currently taking place. No attempt has been made to present a comprehensive and exhaustive listing.

## RESEARCH IN PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL WORK & PSYCHOLOGY

**Heidi Northwood** (Philosophy) and **Leanne Charlesworth** (Social Work) were both members of the small interdisciplinary coalition who participated in the CUR Conference as a team in Spring 2009. When asked how the CUR definition of research might be expressed in philosophy, Heidi offered: “Research in the discipline of philosophy is largely non-empirical and thus, is unlike research in the sciences, social sciences, and professional disciplines. It is the goal of research in philosophy to let the text ‘speak for itself’ as much as possible. What is, I think, unique to philosophy is that one person’s insights do not usually lead to a new theory or fact that can then be transmitted to students. To engage in philosophy is to understand the reason why something is so. To love wisdom is to work on yourself. For the major, the culmination of their undergraduate

research comes in the form of the comprehensive exam where the student reads her paper in the department’s colloquium series and fields questions from the faculty and her student colleagues.” ([Click for list of student research](#)) Two students this year also subsequently presented their papers at RIT as part of an Undergraduate Philosophy Conference on Friday 30 April 2010.

In contrast to philosophy, Leanne Charlesworth notes that “research in social work employs social science research methods to inform and improve social work practice. Often, social work educators use the micro to macro continuum as a way of helping students organize their thinking about the relationships between generalist social work practice and social science research.” It is both empirical and practical and can

occur at different levels to examine the effectiveness of practice on the individual, group, or community.

In psychology, research is likely to be empirical but can be either practical or theoretical. At Nazareth research is pursued on a small scale with undergraduate students as an integral part of the student capstone experience in the senior year. Some students take their projects to the next level—conference presentation or publication. Over a dozen students ([click for list](#)), in fact, during the past three years have moved to the level of presentation or publication. Although the costs in faculty time can be considerable, so too notes **Mary Ann Bush** (Chair of Psychology) can be “the joy of watching them develop. I am often surprised by the quality of their work.”



For more details on events, visit the [CTE website](#).

**How to contact CTE:**  
**teachexl@naz.edu**  
**389-2381**

## Schedule of Events

- April 26 - Undergraduate Classes End
- April 27 - Distinguished Colleagues Reception - Forum
- April 28 - May 4 - Semester Exams
- April 30 - International Wine and Cheese Gala (sponsored by CIE)
- May 9 - Graduate & Undergraduate Commencement @ Blue Cross Arena
- May 10 - Academic Affairs Staff Recognition Luncheon - Forum
- May 11 and 12 - All College Assessment Forum
- May 26 & 27 - FTTL at RIT
- August 23 - Faculty Return
- August 23 - Academic Affairs Retreat
- August 24 - New Faculty Orientation
- August 25 - Faculty Assembly Day
- August 27 - New Student Orientation (Advisor/Advisee)
- August 30 - Fall Classes Begin
- September 6 - Labor Day Holiday - No Classes
- September 10 - Council of Chairs
- September 17 - Faculty Meeting - Forum

## 2010 INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING CONFERENCE

BY MUHAMMAD SHAFIQ

On April 11, Nazareth College hosted the inaugural 2010 Interfaith Understanding Conference on its campus in upstate New York. Three hundred eighty participants engaged in various workshops, listened to lectures by Dr. Eboo Patel, Sr. Joan Chittister, Rabbi Brad Hirschfeld, and many others. The focus of this conference was intentionally inter-generational and offered participants opportunities to engage in interfaith dialogue.

According to a fan on Facebook, "this conference is a beautiful glimpse into the endless possibilities of interfaith unity and development. We are all one people,

no age, race or gender or religion, but this realization only occurred after we recognized and embraced each other's differences and believed that they were blessings from the one who created each of us." Integrating the youth (next generation) created a conference unlike any other, a conference whose focus reinforced the power of faith communities to bring about social change.

[Click here](#) for a related article in the Washington Post.



"The conference gave me hope knowing that each person who walked out of the event would carry that sense of respect with them back into the real world. Each of the attendees would reenter their daily lives and act as missionaries in their own right." - Katherine Indovina, CISD Student Worker

## UPDATES



Forward  
Updates to  
dmathew4  
@naz.edu

- **Maria Hopkins** (Education/Dept. of Language, Literacy and Technology) will be presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the *American Educational Research Association* in Denver, CO (April 30-May 5, 2010). The presentation is entitled "A New Silenced Dialogue: Speaking Through Silence in Discussions of Multicultural Literature."
- **Stella Stepney** (Creative Arts Therapy) will be presenting a pre-conference workshop on the topic "Dropout Prevention with Students At Risk: Fostering Resilience Through Creativity" at the 2010 National Art Education Association Convention in Baltimore, MD in April.
- **William Lammela** (Chemistry) and co-author **Sheila Brady Root** (Biology/Chemistry) presented "Interdisciplinary Team Approach in the Analysis of Foods: An Improved Educational Experience for Analytical Chemistry," at Pittsburgh Conference in March 2010.
- **Ellen Contopidis** (Dept. of Inclusive Childhood Education) and **Kerry Dunn** (Dept. of Inclusive Childhood Education), in collaboration with others, have produced an instructional DVD entitled "Promising Practices: Everyday Classrooms that Make the Promise a Reality." This DVD allows preservice teachers to share a common observation of literacy programs, behavior management techniques, and special education practices that have been successful in local school districts. The DVD has been distributed through out New York State through the Higher Education Task Force for Quality Inclusive Education.
- **Matthew Temple** (Biology) presented a paper on international educational aspects of the Human Genome Project at the INTED Conference in Valencia, Spain on March 9, and a lecture on genomics and medicine at Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary on March 17.
- **Ted Baumhauer** (School of Management) presented *Showmanship for Presenters* at the National Speakers Association meeting in February in Nashville, TN.
- **Kim McGann** (Sociology) gave a talk entitled "Writing for Mr. Right: The Presentation of Self in Online Dating Profiles" at the Eastern Sociological Society Meeting in Boston, MA.
- **Hilda Chacón** (Modern Foreign Languages) presented the paper, "*Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda* de Sabina Berman: ¿a poco somos tan machos?" [*Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda* by Sabina Berman, Are We Really That "Machos"?], XV International Congress of Contemporary Mexican Literature, UTEP, TX, March 4-6, 2010 [read *in absentia*]. She organized and chaired the panel, "The Internet as a Contestatory Medium in Latin America," and presented the paper, "Cyber Citizens Organization via The Internet: Contestatory Experiences in Latin America," 41 Annual Convention NEMLA, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 8-11, 2010. Hilda was appointed as the fifth member of the Modern Languages Association (MLA) Executive Committee Division on Twentieth-Century Latin American Literature (2009-2014). She published the short story (creative writing), "Desaparecida" [Missing]. *Ostara. Revista del Cuerpo Académico de Estudios de Género* [Ostara. Academic Journal on Gender Studies], Universidad Autónoma de Aguas Calientes, Mexico. Número 1 y 2, Vol 1, 2009 and will be giving a website based presentation, "Trespassing Assumed Notions of Self and Otherness: Latin@s and Latin Americans' Cultural Productions in Cyberspace", at the Conference "Hybrid Storyspaces: Redefining the Critical Enterprise in Twenty-First Century Hispanic Literature. An Interactive Multimedia Conference @ Cornell University". Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. April 30th - May 1st, 2010.
- **Brian Bailey** (Dept. of Adolescence Education) delivered the keynote address, *Baseball, Roller Coasters, & Art: The thrills of becoming a teacher*, at Supporting Successful Educators: The First Annual Educator Induction Conference in Albany, NY on March 13, 2010.
- **Brian Witz** (Biology) will be presenting the poster, *Hybrid Human Anatomy and Physiology Course: Online Lecture Using Course Compass, and Traditional Laboratory*, at the annual meeting of the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (HAPS) in Denver, CO this May.
- **Monica Weis** (English/MALS), **Scott Campbell** (Philosophy), **Tom Lappas** (History) and **Doot Bokelman** (Art) will be going to Veszprem, Hungary in April to present papers on American culture at the University of Pannonia. Monica also organized and chaired a panel on "Thomas Merton: Poet, Prophet, Trickster" at the annual College English Association (CEA) Conference in San Antonio at the end of March.
- **Thaddeus Camp** (English/Writing Center) attended the 20th annual Education Technology Day on March 25 at Ithaca College and gave a presentation, "Audio Feedback on Student Writing: How to Do it & Why You Should Use it," in the Teaching with Technology Symposium. Thaddeus was also named as the "Educator Most Influential in My Life" by a former student who received a scholarship from the Allegany County Area Foundation.

(Continued on Page 5)



## UPDATES (Continued from Page 4)

- **Stella Plutino-Calabrese** (CSI/MFL) had two presentations accepted, 1) "Muccino's Vision of Media's Influence on Society." Indiana University Film Symposium, April 7-11, 2010 and 2) "Etymology of Selected Italian Terms Relating to Food and the Kitchen" to be presented at the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI) Annual Conference, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy, May 26-30. She will receive the Italian American Woman of the Year Award in the field of Education at the Italian American Community Center in Rochester, N.Y. on May 6, 2010. Stella also was awarded \$25,000 for the creation of the Italian American Business Archives, a permanent project designed to document, chronicle, record and maintain the history of Italian American Business of Rochester, by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- **Mary Maher** (Nursing) successfully defended her dissertation proposal at University of Rochester School of Nursing: "Perinatal Outcomes of Hispanic Migrant Farmworker Women," on February 18. Mary was also appointed NLN (National League of Nursing) ambassador to Nazareth College.
- **Paul Smoker** (Music) made two new recordings which were released this past year: (1) No Stock Options, The Paul Smoker/Damon Short Quintet, Ninewinds NWCD0291; and (2) Urban Ruminations, Oliver Lake, Paul Smoker, Scott Looney, Lisle Ellis, Meta 010.
- **Shawgi Tell** (Dept. of Social & Psychological Foundations of Education) and **William Cala** (School of Education) delivered a presentation on mayoral control of city schools in the Arts Center on March 23, 2010. They presented the case against mayoral control. Shawgi also served as paper/proposal reviewer for the 39th Annual Meeting of the New York State Foundations of Education Association at Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York.
- **David Steitz** (Psychology/Gerontology) hosted a conference at Nazareth College on March 25, 2010, titled "Sex and Intimacy in Later Life." It was presented by the College at Brockport's Center for Excellence in Gerontological Social Work, the Social Work Departments of the College at Brockport and Nazareth College, the Nazareth College Gerontology Program, and the State Society on Aging of New York (SSA).
- **Rui Cheng** (Education/Dept. of Language, Literacy and Technology) will present "L2 Students' Perceptions of Teacher Written Feedback on Academic Literacy Development" at AERA (American Educational Research Association) 2010 Annual Meeting on May 2nd in Denver, Colorado.
- **Donna Dettman** (HEOP) had her proposal, *The Purpose of Manners: Netiquette and Etiquette as Power in the Pursuit of Academic and Professional Success*, accepted for presentation at the EOP 2010 Academic Advisor and Student Support Professional Development Training Conference June 3-5.
- **Jennifer Leigh** (School of Management) with colleagues Joy Beatty (University of Michigan-Dearborn) and Kathy Lund Dean (Idaho State) are the recipients of the Fritz Roethlisberger Memorial Award for the best article published during 2009 in the Journal of Management Education. Their article is titled "Philosophy Rediscovered: Exploring the Connections Between Teaching Philosophies, Educational Philosophies and Philosophy" and appeared in the February 2009 issue. The Selection Committee chose this paper in conjunction with their companion article, "Finding our Roots: An Exercise for Creating a Personal Teaching Philosophy Statement." The award will be officially announced at the Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference at the University of New Mexico in June 2010.
- **Joseph Viera** (English) delivered a conference paper, entitled "Global Migrations and Identity Construction in Cristina García's *The Agüero Sisters*," at the Forty-first Annual Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA) Convention in Montréal, Québec, April 8-11, 2010.
- **Jennifer Collins** (Physical Therapy), **Staffan Elgelid** (Physical Therapy) and students Kyle Baxter ('10G) and Sarah Lynch ('10G) presented research at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research in Washington, D.C. on March 25-27, 2010.
- **Zbigniew Granat** (Music) had the following publications: 1) "An East Side Story: Polish Soil, American Jazz, and the Thing That Grew," in *Crosscurrents: American and European Music in Interaction, 1900- 2000*, ed. Felix Meyer (Basel: Paul Sacher Stiftung) [forthcoming] and 2) "Rediscovering 'Sonoristics': A Groundbreaking Theory from the Margins of Musicology," in *Music's Intellectual History*, ed. by Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2009). Zbigniew also gave the following paper presentations: 1) "Chopin the Postmodernist: Redefining Narrativity in His Select Piano Compositions" at the International Chopin Congress 1810/2010 held in Warsaw, Poland, February 2010, 2) "Willis Conover Meets Polish Jazz: Cold War Cultural Politics and the Birth of an Eastern Avant-Garde" presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society held in Philadelphia, PA, November 2009 and 3) "The 'Sonic Weapon' Behind the Wall: Polish Jazz After 1956" presented at the Second Social and Scholarly Platform held in Nazareth College, Rochester, NY, November 2009.

(Continued on Page 6)

## UPDATES (Continued from Page 5)

- **Marjorie Roth** (Music) has been selected as the *Master Teacher* for The American Musicological Society Committee on Career-Related Issues session that will be held in Indianapolis at the national conference this fall. Marjorie will also present the paper, "Opportunity Lost: Christian Prophecy, Musical Magic, and the Road Not Taken in Counter-Reformation Rome," at a conference on Early Modern Rome, sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and University Programs in Italy, May 13-15, 2010.
- **Julia Postler** (Education/Dept. of Language, Literacy and Technology) presented "Why a wiki? Using a wiki to promote critical thinking and participation in higher education" at the Ithaca College Technology Symposium that was co-sponsored by RIT on March 25.
- **Leanne Charlesworth** (Social Work) and **Ginny David** (Social Work) delivered the presentation, *Comprehensive community-campus collaboration: The Rochester Community-University Partnership Project*, at the 27th Annual Baccalaureate Social Work Education Conference, Atlanta GA, March 17-21, 2010.
- **Pam Viggiani** (Social Work) delivered the presentation, *Teaching diversity and social justice: An interactive multidimensional approach*, at the 27th Annual Baccalaureate Social Work Education Conference, Atlanta GA, March 17-21, 2010.
- **Muhammad Shafiq** (Religious Studies/CISD) presented a paper, "Acknowledge Responsibility for Conflict and Injustice and Seek Repentance and Forgiveness," at the Just Peace Making Conference in New York on January 31 - February 1, 2010.
- **Akhtar Ghassemi** (Nursing) attended the Annual Clinical Nurse Leader Summit (National Summit) on January 20-22, 2010.
- **Stephen Demanchick** (Creative Arts Therapy) was recently appointed to the editorial board of the International Journal of Play Therapy. In addition, he was asked to serve as Chairperson for University Education Committee for the Association of Play Therapy.
- **Marie Watkins** (Center for Service Learning) has been selected as an Outstanding Field Educator for University of Buffalo's Masters of Social Work program for the 2009-2010 academic year. The U. B. MSW graduate students' field placement included service-learning and youth development outreach and group work with youth who attend after-school programs at School #34 in Rochester, the Dr. Douglas Smith Learning Center after-school program and the Art as Expression Group at Industry Residential Center. They also completed a major funding analysis of afterschool programs for the Rochester Community Foundation. Through their efforts, Nazareth College and the work of the Center for Service-Learning has been able to extend its scope, reach and services.
- **Al Cabral** (School of Management) has been selected as a NACADA Outstanding Advising Award Winner in the Faculty Advising category as part of the 2010 Annual Awards Program for Academic Advising. He will be recognized for this award at the special Awards Ceremony and Reception being held at the annual NACADA Conference in Florida this fall.
- **Estella Norwood Evans** (Social Work) recently received an 'upgrade' in her appointment as a member of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation to Work Group Chair responsible for training, supporting other newly appointed members of the commission, attendance at the closed Executive Committee meetings, clarity regarding decision letters sent to programs regarding reaffirmation, candidacy, etc.

## 2010 SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION GRANTS AWARDED

Congratulations to the 41 faculty members who received Faculty Scholarship and Innovation Grants this year (for a total of 35 different projects). Many of the funded projects involved more than one faculty member or crossed disciplinary boundaries, such as those between math and nursing or chemistry and art. Increasingly, faculty

are finding exciting ways to foster the synergy between research and teaching. For some, research and scholarly interests inform their teaching while for others teaching informs their research and scholarly pursuits.

A complete listing of the projects (and faculty) funded this year is posted

online at: <http://www.naz.edu/dept/cte/>

Vignettes of the finished projects will be available and posted on the CTE website in the fall.

## RESEARCH IN THE DISCIPLINES: ART

**Cathy Sweet** (Art) was another member of the small delegation who traveled as an interdisciplinary team to CUR in Spring 2009. What follows was her conceptualization of how the CUR definition of Undergraduate Student Research might apply to the studio arts.

“Studio Art: Throughout their course of study, studio art majors learn to contextualize their art making process to develop an understanding of how the elements and principles in art affect the communicative power of their work. Students investigate this first hand through both the creation of their own artwork as well as in critiques (a semi-structured dialogue that allows mentoring between professor

and student) of the work of others. The final comprehensive exam requires that students present a portfolio of their work that analyzes and evaluates the student’s personal growth as an artist.

Art History: Scholarly research in art history consists of in-depth investigation into the specific influences that effect both the creation and meanings of an artwork. The art history students must select their subject based on their knowledge of the field, in order to avoid replicating or contradicting existing scholarship, and on their personal ability to evaluate the aesthetic content of art. For the final comprehensive exam, the art history majors present a defense of their the-

sis in oral and written form.

Art Education: The art education undergraduate students conduct action research throughout their program through the practice of self-reflective journal writing and mentored discussions of pedagogical practices in both studio art and art education. The artist-teacher statement and student portfolio of course work provide the art education students with the opportunity to analyze and evaluate their personal beliefs about art education and how that will translate to their practice in the classroom.”

## RESEARCH IN THE DISCIPLINES: SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

In the physical and biological sciences as well as Mathematics, undergraduate research is believed to have inherent value because it provides authentic problem-solving experience for students. The website for the department of Chemistry and Biochemistry notes that undergraduate research is “an integral component in the scientific education of our students. As early as the first semester, Chemistry and Biochemistry students have the opportunity to become involved in undergraduate research...During the undergraduate research experience, students engage in projects that enable them to learn how to answer interesting scientific questions, to solve complex problems, and to develop innovative technologies. Our students learn the art of scientific investigation, gain confidence in working in the laboratory and acquire independence, self-reliance and self-discipline.”

Similarly, in Biology, undergraduate

research provides “an exciting opportunity for biology students to work with faculty and experience the process of discovery...Students collaborate with professors and other students to investigate novel questions stemming from professors’ areas of expertise. These investigations may involve the collection of data in the laboratory or the field or both. Students experience the entire process of research from the formulation of a research question and proposal to data analysis, interpretation and presentation of results.”

And in Mathematics “Participation in a research experience gives students the opportunity to further develop their ability to learn mathematics independently, to make connections between different branches of mathematics, and to work closely with mathematics faculty members. Research is a recommended part of every undergraduate mathematics curriculum according to the CUPM Guidelines.”

Examples of recent research projects in [Chemistry and Biochemistry](#), [Biology](#), and [Mathematics](#) are available on their respective websites.



*Brittany Forcione (Biology '10)*

*Photo by Alex Shukoff*

## FACULTY AND STUDENT UNDERGRAD RESEARCH (Cont'd from Page 1)

For McGann, the opportunity to work with her students on an ongoing research project was useful. "They really looked at the data with fresh eyes and provided an invaluable variety of perspectives during the inductive portion of our analysis. It was also extremely helpful to meet for brainstorming sessions and be able to bounce ideas back and forth while we wrestled with our

findings and what they meant. This type of research really is the best-case scenario for learning how to bring theory to practice."

The students seem to agree. When asked about his experience attending and presenting his own research at a professional conference, Dave replied, "In seeing many people of somewhat similar inter-

ests together was something I had not experienced before but I think this also solidified my interest in the sociology major and gave me some visible options of the many directions I can go with my major. The conference was also a fantastic networking opportunity and I made some new friendships and connections while strengthening some that had already existed beforehand."

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

### STUDENT RESEARCH: WHY DO IT?

Mentoring and supporting student research offers faculty an opportunity to share their discipline in a rich and authentic way with others as students become engaged with the subject. "Mentoring student research also helps to keep faculty fresh and engaged," Dean **Deb Dooley** (CAS) observes, "making them stronger teachers by opening their eyes to new approaches and information." And she adds, "encouraging student research wherever possible makes sense since it is perhaps one of the most deeply conceived forms of experiential learning. It offers the students the opportunity for advance application of what they have learned as well as the opportunity to become a theorizer in their own cognitive space." Faculty do indeed report that they derive considerable pleasure from watching their students develop and become involved in the subject matter that they themselves love so much.

And for the student, there are benefits as well. Doing research is doing en-

gaged learning that leads to greater understanding of the material and is not limited to problems presented in the classroom. It allows them to go beyond simply reciting someone else's answers to a problem. An opportunity to do research allows the student to grow, to shape, and answer problems that are meaningful to them with the specialized tools of a discipline and prepares them for reflecting on and evaluating the research of others.

Becoming engaged in research projects also allows students to answer the critical question: Can we believe the experts? It gives them some understanding of how they might enter (and understand) the cycle of discovery that belongs with each field. And they can come to appreciate more fully how disciplinary frameworks shape not only the questions you can ask but also the answers you will find.

This final issue of the Academic Affairs Report has been dedicated to the collective display of the scattered evidence of student research at Nazareth. I know I have left some groups out. The process of collecting and organizing the various and varied artifacts that reflect student research activity has been a difficult, time-consuming, and surprisingly complicated task. But the process

has also been informative. My apologies to any groups or students who have been omitted. This, I hope, is only a first step and I assure you that any omissions absolutely do not stem from a desire to exclude. Rather, omissions were likely due to a lack of easy access to the information I needed, which arrived in a variety of different forms. Finding a common format for the display itself proved to be something of a challenge, as well.

Ultimately, however, my goal has not been to produce a comprehensive catalog as much as to conduct a bit "research" of my own. Does the collective display tell us more than the individual parts? My own analysis would be that it does (although I look forward to yours, as well) and speaks loudly for a kind of teaching excellence that is very much a part of the Nazareth tradition and history. With luck, the conversation and organized display can continue. We can (and will) correct for any and all omissions then.

Warmest Regards,

*Diane Enerson*

[Click here to view a growing list of student research.](#)