Spring Faculty & Staff Appreciation Reception

On May 2nd, 2012, the General Education Program held a Faculty & Staff Appreciation Reception to honor all the work faculty and staff do in support of student learning. The reception also honored the recipients of three awards: Ila Prouty (Art) was awarded the Wayne D. Duncan Appalachian State University Faculty Enrichment and Teaching Fellowship, Michael Behrent (History) was awarded the Rennie W. Brantz Award for Outstanding Teaching in the First Year Seminar and Sherry Alusow Hart (English) was awarded the Non Tenure Track Faculty Award for Excellence in General Education Teaching.
Students in Rosa Dargan-Powers’ First Year Seminar class “Puppetry in the Community” are introduced to researching and writing at the college level while immersing themselves in the creative process. Students begin the semester by researching regional puppetry from various cultures as well as contemporary puppetry practices such as puppetry in education and puppetry as political activism. This research emphasizes the context in which the puppets are created and how the puppet traditions support and reflect the culture, era, and educational environment in which they are made and used.

After gaining a cultural context of puppetry, students are able to focus on their own personal stories. Through numerous family interviews, stories of important life events emerge. Each student then creates a puppet to reflect one of these stories, which they share with their peers.

In a second project, students are expected to create a personalized mask. After helping one another create a plaster cast of their face, students are able to make a mask to reflect their personal beliefs or values. The mask becomes a way of personal transformation as students reflect on their identity.

Dargan-Powers provides writing prompts to help students explore and deepen their creative process. A prompt might be, “How does fear block the creative process and how can you work through this?” Answers to these types of questions help students discover the strength and resources to overcome the challenges of college and life beyond.

At the end of the semester, students share their personal journey through a hand-made journal. This journal may include stories, sketches, responses to writing prompts and other explorations of the creative process. Dargan-Powers encourages students to notice “peak experiences” – moments throughout the semester that held deeper significance and helped guide them on their journey. The intention of this is for students to notice what is important so they can make better life decisions based on interests rather than getting stuck on one linear path.

“Puppetry in the Community” culminates in a student-produced event bringing puppets into the community. This past semester, students participated in the International Day of Peace Project in Todd, NC, brightening the day with their smiles and colorful creations as they marched down the streets with puppets held high.

**Summer 2012 Grants**

This summer, the General Education Program is providing over 120 grants to faculty across campus. The program is funding five distinct types of grants:

1) Grants to teams of faculty to develop shared learning outcomes for their course
2) Grants to teams of faculty to develop new assignments and materials that will strengthen integration among courses
3) Grants to a team of faculty to develop materials that FYS instructors can use to teach freshmen about the goals of liberal education
4) Grants to individual First Year Seminar instructors to develop course guides for their FYS sections
5) Grants to individual First Year Seminar instructors to develop assessable assignments for their FYS sections

Final reports from grant recipients will be posted on the General Education Program website in late summer. For further information about the grants, visit: [http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/grants](http://generaleducation.appstate.edu/grants).