



The Staff Council

Chronicle

News and more for the Smith College community

March 2006



BayState Works and Smith

By Jan Cole



More than a year ago, Jay Lucey, HVAC systems operator and president of Local 263, discovered the availability of a grant through BayState Works. Programs would provide staff with opportunities for personal growth, professional development and networking, making it easier to see what it takes to advance in various trades. While some participants might look to make lateral moves or advance, others may acquire a better understanding of what a manager's job entails or discover that they are happy in their current positions.

Diane Benoit, manager of Building Services, confirmed that Smith College management would support flexible scheduling to accommodate staff participation in the program. Sylvia Crafts, dining room assistant, represented the interests of Local 211, and administrative support was provided by Kathy Zieja, director of Dining Services, and Candace Baer, interim director of Human Resources. With the college soundly behind the program, Jay's efforts resulted in a grant award, making it possible for Dining Services and Physical Plant employees to take part in BayState Works programs.

Computer use is not required for many Dining Services and Physical Plant positions, so some staff approach computers with understandable apprehension or disinterest. Almost 70 staff members attended Computers 101, a course designed to help attendees feel more comfortable with using computers, including how to surf the Web. Several participants purchase a computer for home use. Others discovered they wanted to learn more. ITS's Liane Hartman and Kate Etzel were at the ready, offering classes in Word, Web Search, GroupWise and how to tune up a computer.

(continued on page 2)



What's Inside

- pp. 1 – 2 BayState Works and Smith, Jan Cole
- p. 3 Strategic Planning: Staff Insights, Carol T. Christ
- p. 4 Opportunity and Timing, Sam Rush
- Letter to the Editor, Wendy Martinez
- Staff Profiles: Gail Hathaway and Pam Kukucka
- p. 5 Book, Movie & Music Exchange
- p. 6 C.I.A.O.

BayState Works (continued from page 1)

Supervisory Training I attracted 28 participants, with 16 continuing on to Supervisory Training II. They examined conflict resolution, time management and problem solving, working with diverse groups and learning to see things from different sides of an issue. Employees report noticing increased collaboration, better communication and more willingness to assist others in day-to-day operations.

In January, employees from Mount Holyoke College joined 80 Smith College at a Career Pathways Fair. Together they explored the educational, vocational and professional careers within their respective institutions and in the broader community. A wide range of disciplines were surveyed, including plumbing, electrical, HVAC, culinary, medical, childcare, carpentry, painting and groundskeeping. They also reviewed how to construct a resume and revisited job interviewing skills. The discussions were geared toward assisting employees to excel in their current positions as well as providing an opportunity to plan for the future by exploring ways to advance in the same vocation or change directions altogether.



The true success of this program is best reflected by comments and thoughts from program participants.

"I have seen that the staff is willing to take advantage of training opportunities. Many have signed up for classes sponsored through our own HR. I am thrilled that they are willing to take advantage of the classes offered." **Diane Benoit**, manager, Building Services

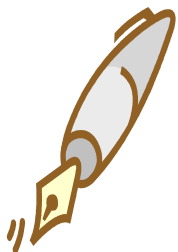
"The grant was a huge success. BayState views Smith as a role model for other companies and has asked us how we were able to bring the Union and the College together because they are having problems getting the training up and running in other areas. We worked through any differences we may have had in order to help better someone's life. Our success shows the dedication of the Unions and management staff. The program has received additional funding from the state because of the success of the program here at Smith."

Art Usher, supervisor, Building Services

(Art used this training as an opportunity to move into his current position.)

"I have taken the opportunity to improve my professional skills and obtain personal growth through the many classes and workshops offered to us here at Smith. I most recently took classes offered through the BayState Works program that focused on management skills. This program has been a catalyst for my decision to follow a new career path. These offerings through Smith are invaluable, and I would encourage everyone to participate. The results have been priceless." **Deb Letourneau**, assistant, Admission

(Deb used the career coaching, got assistance with her resume and job interviewing skills and successfully applied for her current position. She is now looking into the University Without Walls program at UMass to pursue a degree in management and nutrition.)



"I cannot say enough about the willingness of the department heads to allow rescheduling, flex time, and other creative means to allow us to attend these training courses. Candace Baer in Human Resources...was very supportive and willing to work with us on many different levels. The rewards of this program may be measured in tangibles such as job transfers or advancements as well as in the intangibles, such as the staff understanding where they want to be on their career path. For many of us, where we want to be is right where we are. For those of us who do wish to pursue other positions, we now have additional resources to help us plan those next career moves." **Sylvia Crafts**, dining room assistant

Strategic Planning: Staff Insights

From President Carol T. Christ

Throughout my time at Smith, I have been struck by the deep commitment of staff members to ensuring that Smith students receive the best possible education, both in the classroom and beyond. In the series of campus discussions about planning for Smith's future, I have held four reserved specifically for staff. Each of these conversations was rich with insights about the capacities important to develop in our students and the priorities critical for the college. I would like to share some of the ideas that have emerged in these conversations.



- Staff put emphasis on the following capacities as critical to the future success of our students: teamwork, resilience, civility. Staff emphasized that students need to know how to represent themselves well, not just in writing, but in coming to an office to make a request or present a proposal or in representing their point of view in a conversation.
- There was concern about technological literacy and about creating a more level playing field in computing skills. Staff felt that providing a standard computer to every student would enable them to be more effective in assisting students to attain such skills.
- Smith should enhance the academic support available to students to assure that every student we admit has the tools to succeed. Staff expressed pride in the socio-economic diversity of the student body, while they recognized the challenges that different levels of secondary school preparation present. They were concerned about students who do not feel successful at Smith. They reinforced what many alumnae have told us—that the greatest benefit Smith provides is confidence in one's own capacities—and urged that we assure every student graduate with the skills critical to such confidence.
- Smith should give more deliberate attention to issues of work/life balance in programs that it develops for students. Students need to understand tradeoffs they will face, and not glibly assume they can have it all. They should understand the many ways to define and measure success. There was considerable concern expressed about a culture of stress at Smith as well as a sense that the community needs to lighten up and loosen up. Closely connected to this issue was a desire for more community-building activities and events, ranging from recreation to social engagement. Staff worried both about the large number of poorly attended events at Smith and the lack of events shared by the whole community.
- Smith should make sustainability one of the core values of every aspect of its operations. It should teach students care in the use of resources and a sense of their value.
- Smith should reshape its student employment program in a more strategic way, using it to help develop capacities critical for success and to provide experience useful for moving into the workplace after Smith. Staff could assume leadership in developing and sustaining such a program.
- Smith should make social engagement a core value and create more structured opportunities to work in the community, perhaps through more community-based learning.
- Smith should strive to create and sustain a culture of respect—sensitivity to the needs of others, acceptance of difference—and model these values in its workplace policies and practices

As you can see, this is a rich set of ideas. I want to thank the staff members who gave their voices and insights to this process, and I encourage the conversation to continue. Please send further thoughts to planning@smith.edu.

From the Chair

Opportunity and Timing



Actors have known for thousands of years that timing is everything. In performance, for example, knowing when to deliver the punch line or just how long you wait to speak can make the difference in the success or failure of a theatrical moment. That sense of timing has always been linked with recognizing when an opportunity is at hand, knowing what the stakes are and knowing when to respond.

As part of the planning for Smith's future, President Christ's recent strategic planning conversations are a great example of the opportunity and timing relationship. I had the pleasure of hosting one of the February meetings for Staff Council members and other staff. It was a significant opportunity for the staff to be invited in such an open manner to provide input on the college's priorities and goals. The choices we make today will affect what Smith will be a decade or more from now—pretty important stakes if you ask me. Will the college listen to what we have to say? I certainly hope so. I definitely felt as though President Christ heard and appreciated the input we offered at our gathering.

There are a few more conversations scheduled before the end of March. If you can't make it in person, I encourage you to send an email or letter to the President's office with any thoughts you may have. This is a rare opportunity. The timing couldn't be better and your input will only make Smith a better institution.

Sam Rush, chair, Staff Council

Letter to the Editor

Kudos to Sabrina Marsh, Senior Assistant Director, Office of Admissions! She is always looking for ways to enhance the experiences of staff, students and faculty at the college. She serves as co-chair on the Staff Council Activities Committee and involves herself with the community in many other ways.

During one of the busiest times in admissions, she managed many details, making Mardi Gras Madness a successful fund-raising event. And for many years now, she has run Open Campus, an opportunity for students who have been accepted to the college to see how wonderful Smith is before making their decision to enroll.

I am confident that if you spoke to Sabrina's colleagues at the Admission Office and on Staff Council, they would say what an asset she is to the college. I have known Sabrina for approximately 8 years and feel that she makes such great contributions to the Smith community. Kudos, Sabrina!

Sincerely, Wendy Martinez, administrative assistant, Campus School

S T A F F P R O F I L E S

Gail Hathaway

Number of years at Smith: 17

Family: Husband, Ray; Daughter and Son-in-law, Kelly and Rob; Grandchildren, Sam 8 and Leah 4

Favorite food: Not fussy - I love to eat, especially if someone else cooks!!!!!!

Favorite place to vacation: My own back yard and short jaunts within New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

What book are you currently reading: A series of novels by Alexander McCall Smith - The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

Favorite part of my job: Working with people and helping to get things done.



Position: Both Gail and Pam work as customer service representative at Physical Plant

Pam Kukucka

Number of years at Smith: 18 ½

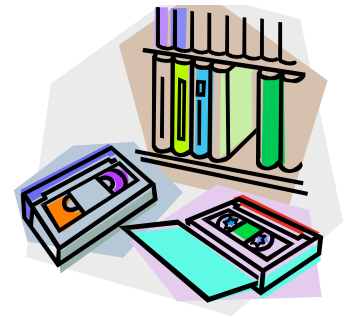
Family: Husband, Ed; Children, Kevin, Deborah and Leslie; Two Granddaughters - Neave 2 ½ and Delaney 1 ½ and a third, Maura (on the way)

Favorite food: Italian

Favorite place to vacation: York, Maine; Niagara Falls, Canada

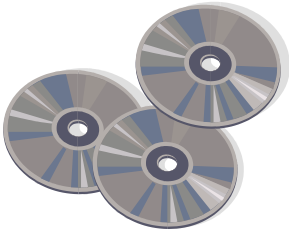
What book are you currently reading: No time to read. I sew/do crafts, outside gardening, indoor plants, & substitute church organist.

Favorite part of my job: Working with and helping a diversity of people.



The Staff Council Activities Committee
Presents the 6th Annual

BOOK, MOVIE & MUSIC EXCHANGE



Monday, March 27, 2006
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Neilson Browsing Room



Clean out your bookshelves, your CD racks, and your movie collection and trade your discards in for something new. Please drop off items to be exchanged in Neilson Browsing Room from **Wednesday, March 22, through Friday, March 24, from noon to 2 p.m.** Each item has a point value:

- paperback books = 1 point
- hardcovers/books on tape = 2 points
- compact discs (CDs) = 2 points
- video cassette tapes = 3 points
- CD-ROMS/computer games = 3 points
- DVDs = 4 points



NO TEXTBOOKS PLEASE

You will get a receipt indicating how much credit you have accumulated for the exchange. This will be your admission into this event. Please have your books, discs, etc. counted and sorted prior to dropping them off. Please contact Linda LaFlam at llaflam@smith.edu or x2457 with questions or to sign up to help. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SUPPORT THIS EVENT.**



This event is wheelchair accessible.

FAVORITE POEM PROJECT

Annie Boutelle of the English Department and Neela Wickremesinghe, STRIDE student, are currently constructing a video archive: members of the Smith community reading a favorite poem and talking about why it has meaning for them. It would be great to have many staff members participate.



They hope that the entire archive will find a home in the Smith College Archives as a record of the campus in the early 21st century and of the role that poetry plays in human lives. They may also make a short movie of highlights from the recordings.

New York City Bus Trip, \$27 per person

Saturday, April 29, 2006
Depart from Smith at 7:00 a.m.
Depart from NYC at 7:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Smith College
Staff Council Activities Committee.



Catch a show.

Shop.

See the sights.

Visit a museum or two.

To reserve your seat, contact:
staffactivities@email.smith.edu
or call ext. 2678



Staff Visions 2006

November 6-December 15

Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library

Smith staff are invited to submit up to three works of art or craft in a variety of media to the Staff Visions exhibition. Watch for details and application forms in September. In the meantime, nurture your creative side. Work on your art! This event is sponsored by Staff Council and the Staff Visions Committee.

For more information contact Mimi Lempart, mlempart@email.smith.edu

The Staff Council Chronicle is funded by the Smith College Staff Council and is published several times a year by and for Smith College staff. It is distributed to staff and posted on the Web at: www.smith.edu/staffcouncil.

Staff are encouraged to offer story ideas and/or writing services. Letters to the Editor are encouraged. Please include your name and campus address. The Staff Council Chronicle reserves the right to edit material for clarity and length. Forward submissions to the editors:

Stacey Anasazi, Museum of Art, Ext. 2654
sanasazi@smith.edu

Xinh Spangler, Physical Plant, Ext. 2415
xspangle@smith.edu

Design: Stacey Anasazi Proofreader: Nancy Brady, Carla Cooke, Marti Hobbes, Mimi Lempart
Printing: Central Services

March 2006 All rights reserved ©

What issues do you think
Staff Council
should be exploring
in the year ahead?

Send your comments to:
srush@smith.edu
or
Sam Rush
Theater Dept.
Ext. 3249