Students Present Excellent Ideas at Student Conference

Trey Darby’s idea for a Kite Festival was our favorite student suggestion as he has volunteered to take on the entire project himself and intends to “make it happen” during the Outdoor Expo (April 8). He has been getting some small donations of kite making materials and will even handle the publicity (as former Skyline Editor). He even earned a spot on the Outdoor Expo committee.

Another good idea presented by Jessica Lien was Bike Rentals/Lockers. She showed convincing photos of students trying to keep their bikes safe from vandals (dragging them upstairs and around stairwells and storing them in their rooms). She said it was so much trouble, they seldom used their bikes. She wants enclosed bike lockers at dorms, the sports complex, and ANRS. Also wants bikes for rent and several people in the audience said they thought bikes would be donated by local people. Dean of Student Life, Liz Garcia, thought rental could be handled by Rec Sports.

Paul Chambers suggested a Freshman Camp instead or in addition to orientation. He said freshman want a social camp to help them get acquainted. His presentation brought out lots of memories about SRSU traditions. Plans are already underway to find instructors for “Cotton-eyed Joe” and for polling our alumni for traditions that endeared them to Sul Ross. Paul suggests an off-campus camp setting like Paisano or Prude Ranch and recommended that students pay extra.

Nolan Pritchard suggested a Camp Fair, inviting various summer camps to interview students for summer employment and/or advertise their facilities. We intend to incorporate it into the Outdoor Expo and try to schedule it earlier next year, as he suggests.

Robbie McDaniel gave a very engaging presentation on poor teaching techniques. We will suggest a viewing for Faculty Assembly.

Blakely Davis suggested Horticulture Therapy, Dean Rob Kinucan, in the audience, said it had been started at ANRS last year but the interested student stopped. Other audience members brought up several local community gardens. She will follow up.

Jessica Villanueva and Glen Lasoya’s idea for Outdoor Movies received a good response. Jeff Blake, Campus Activities Coordinator suggested hanging a “screen” on a large building rather than an inflatable screen that could be stolen or blown over. The audience discussed possibly using the Outdoor Theatre (not used in winter). Instead of renting movies, the audience suggested student videos, PowerPoint’s, or productions, perhaps the next student conference, and showing game films with players and/or coaches explaining (might increase fans and give players experience of speaking to the public). Need to install some hooks and purchase outdoor projector.

(continued next page)
Addie Bencomo, a last minute fill-in, gave an excellent presentation on creating student engagement through local research topics. She presented her project on Barry Scobee. Colton Woodward, Josh Cross and Everett Morrow gave a great presentation on Wind Power, targeting the community. It might also be something SRSU would be interested in to reduce electricity costs?

Several students discussed ideas for serving the community or fellow students: Eden Simon described Wildfire Ministries, Kendal Chilcott and Cori Fain described Equine Therapy. Ben Stringer’s idea for Guided Astronomical Viewing was presented by Susan Spring. Stringer wants six Celestron 8 telescopes ($1699 ea), and says this would enable us to possibly create coop with McDonald Observatory using students in real research a observing and recording.

Jeremy Baade of Rec Sports has already ordered a 9-hole Frisbee Golf set!

Chris Garcia Hits Pilot Homerun!

As part of the QEP Pilot Program, Chris Garcia, Lecturer in the Academic Center for Excellence, organized a dodgeball team called the Aces in one of his four sections of ED 0300 to participate in an intramural tournament this past October. Garcia explained “the idea was to do something that would help bridge the personal relationship gap that often exists between student and teacher.”

The Aces, who were all students from the Academic Center for Excellence, won the tournament. Garcia stated that the more important outcome was the positive feedback of students relating to him as a person and not just as an instructor relaying information.

The numbers tell the tale. The section of ED 0300 (Developmental Reading) students who participated in the dodgeball competition had a 73% pass rate. The average pass rate for the other three sections of Garcia’s ED 0300 (students who did not participate in the dodgeball activity) was 64%.
Nine QEP grills have been installed by Physical Plant at various locations around campus: three around the Lobo Village, one at the sand volleyball courts, one at Physical Plant, IT, ANRS, and two at Kokernot Lodge. Freshman Sharoya Hall and art professor Jim Bob Salazar are ready to start cooking! We still have one waiting for a home.
Dr. Vicki Lott Presents Critical Thinking Workshop in January

Story by Jason Hennington

As a part of the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP), Sul Ross State University students, faculty, and staff were invited to take part in an educational workshop geared at critical thinking.

Dr. Vicki Vernon Lott, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lane College in Jackson, TN directed the workshop entitled “Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum” which was aimed at improving teaching and learning methods among students and professors.

“Our two main goals are to improve our thinking and to guide our students to critical thinking and goals such as graduation,” Lott explained during her introduction.

Dr. Barney Nelson, Associate Professor of English and Director of the SRSU QEP, invited Lott to Sul Ross after taking part in presentations given by Lott in the past.

“I invited Dr. Lott because I had heard and/or seen her present three very successful sessions at SACS conferences (a workshop, a roundtable discussion, and a formal talk),” Nelson said.

According to Nelson, Lott's presentation was different from the presentations she had already seen.

“The workshop she presented here was very different from what I had seen and heard before,” Nelson said. “I'm wondering if part of what she tried to do was help some of us realize what our own classrooms might sometimes feel like to our students or to give a confidence boost to those whose classrooms might be more engaging and active like her ending activity.”

The idea of teaching in and out of the classroom was expressed during the workshop. Professors were encouraged to use elements outside of the classroom to find something students can relate to. After clarifying the difference between remembering and memorization, Lott explained why this method will help the student retain what they have learned in the future.

“Critical thinking is an art and a science,” Lott said. “If we don’t guide it, then it can become poor.”

Lott stressed that practice is a major part of maintaining critical thinking. In an effort to explain the importance of practice, Lott made reference to singing legends Patti LaBelle and Aretha Franklin, who after over 20 years in the music business, still practice with a vocal coach regularly.

During the workshop Lott elaborated on certain points that could help students and professors with critical thinking. She stressed six terms throughout the day that were important for critical thinking: egocentrism, attitude, humility, empathy, clarity, and perspective.

“We can use these skills in developing student leaders,” Lott said.

The workshop also clarified excerpts from the Sul Ross QEP, which were read aloud and explained by Lott. (cont. next page)
Geology classes from Sul Ross and Midland College searched for garnet crystals on a recent combined field trip to the Van Horn area. This was one of six geology field trips offered so far during the Fall semester. Left to right are Amy Buntin, Midland College geology major, Ed Goebel, Sul Ross geology graduate student, Kendall Craig, Director of the Sul Ross-Midland College Science Initiative, and David Rohr, Chair, Earth and Physical Sciences. (Photo by Liz Measures)

Jim Bob Salazar and Kevin Urbanczyk inspect the new turn on Hancock Hill Hike and Bike Trail built by Hill Club members. (Photo by Donna Greene)

February 19th
Join us for snacks &
Outdoor Learning Brainstorm Faculty
Mixer
BYOB/RB
Kokernot Lodge
All Grad Teaching Assistants Invited

QEP received NCAA/ASC Tier II grant of $3,218 for Lott Workshop. Tier II grants support equity issues and encourage development of better relationships between faculty and athletics.