



Lobo Stars

Newsletter 3

Sul Ross State University Quality Enhancement Plan



Faculty Seminar Presents Year Recap to Faculty and TAs

At the close of a year of meetings, faculty seminar members each created a PowerPoint slide and a “haiku” of QEP wisdom to present to first the graduate Teaching Assistants and then the faculty and staff at large. The finished project condensed the year of exploring the learning opportunities embedded in engagement, critical thinking, and outdoor learning.

Seminar members had encouraged each other’s unique perspectives and teaching styles, so the presentation tried to retain that feeling of diversity and collegiality.

Graduate Teaching Assistants followed the presentation with thought provoking questions, often stumping the seasoned faculty members. TA’s received encouragement to show their enthusiasm for their subject, work hard, and realize that the experienced teachers often faced similar problems.

Slides ranged from nature scenes to cartoons to text. Messages included emphasis on our own evolution, on opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in the field, on the strength of combining student activities with academics, trading fantasy for reality, and on the importance of learning over grades. Members agreed that good teaching is not “helping” but challenging our students to develop their strengths. Good teachers are more like coaches in that they inspire engagement in classroom “practice” so that they are not only ready but hungry for the “game” or tests of life.

Members presented the same PowerPoint at Vic Morgan’s end of the year Faculty/Staff Meeting in May with over 70 in the audience.

To sign up for 09-10, contact Donna Green at dgreene@sulross.edu

Badgerow Presentations

After attending a Critical Thinking workshop in California as the official Faculty Assembly representative, Justin Badgerow returned to present one brief recap at the March Faculty Assembly meeting and a longer version at a luncheon hosted by Faculty Assembly and attended by 17 faculty.

He stressed many of the same points made by Vicki Lott at our earlier faculty workshop, but with his usual professionalism and enthusiastic delivery, he was much better received during both presentations. We hate to lose him!

He stressed becoming familiar with the little blue book on Critical Thinking (Donna has copies). He reiterated the easy-to-use exercise on SEE-IT: State it, expand it (in other words), give an example, and illustrate it with an analogy that your audience will understand (it's like...).

He also stressed the Intellectual traits exhibited by a good critical thinker: humility, courage, empathy, autonomy, integrity, perseverance, confidence in reason, and fair-mindedness.

He challenged faculty to analyze the "logic of your discipline" by picking three major goals that students need to understand. Then think about how you reach those goals within the discipline. Then do the same for each course within the discipline: 3 major goals and how to reach them. His point was that sometimes we get so caught up in details that we forget the reasons students should study our disciplines and take our classes.

He had several handouts on assessment, but stressed that an ideal assessment would be to test the student's retention six months later.

His participation and travel were QEP funded.

Join Us For **A Perfect Storm: Understanding and Managing Millennials**

Tuesday, 7/14/09 12:00-1:30 PM

Featured Higher Education Presenter:
W. Scott Lewis, J.D.

- How to effectively discipline a millennial student in the classroom or workplace.
- How to recognize early warning behaviors specific to this generation.
- How to respond appropriately to 'red flags' and avoid unintentionally making problems worse.

ACE Retreat: Big Success!



ACE Faculty participated in a QEP funded retreat at the Davis Mountains Education Center in April. Kathy Stein reported exciting results.

As one example, Sandra Chambers will be taking her developmental math students to the football field to study the concept of positive and negative integers. The 50-yard line will represent zero, with everything to the right representing positive, and to the left negative integers. Students will be given addition and subtraction problems as well as word problems to work out on the field.

A second Chambers example uses an area where two straight sidewalks cross as a graph. For student scatter points. Students will plot coordinates, figure out an equation to represent their data, then use a long rope to create slope-intercept forms and see how many student locations fall on the line.

Rudy Kittlitz students will be trying to answer the question, "Why does Mother Nature construct the honeycomb cells as hexagons?"

Jason Leyva's students will be using the Pythagorean Theorem to find the height of a kite.

Robbie Ray's students will be using magic tricks to simplify algebraic expressions and shadows to create images of similar triangles in order to solve proportions through definition of similar polygons, generalize to practical reasoning with ratios and comparisons.

Greene Attends CT Conference

Donna Greene, Coordinator of FS&OL attended the 5th Annual Advancing Teaching and Learning Conference at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. The training sessions were on Using Team Teaching to Promote Critical Thinking; Using Service Learning; Critical Thinking: Mapping and Tracking; and Using Hands-On and Cross-Cultural Teaching Strategies. Dr. Diane Halpern, Chair of Psychology and Director of the Berger Institute for Work, Family and Children at Claremont McKenna College in California, presented "Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking: How to Make Critical Thinking a Learning Outcome." (The Power Point she presented is found on the Sul Ross Outdoor Learning/Faculty Support website at <http://www.sulross.edu/pages/6775.asp>).

Outdoor Expo 09



Seventeen outdoor-based organizations participated in the Outdoor Expo in April. Demonstrations included Surviving the Desert: Staying Hydrated (Big Bend National Park) and hula hooping (Desert Sports). Other off-campus organizations distributed information and recruited volunteers or hired summer workers, including: Native Plant Society, Big Bend Ranch State Park, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Sierra Club, The Sunshine House, Paisano Baptist Encampment, Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, Texas Master Naturalist Program, and Prude Ranch.

In addition, SRSU's Rec Sports provided a camp setup featuring gear that students can check out, and Hill Club provided bike repair and canoe safety. Geology Club, Hill Students Recycling and Serving Society (SRSS), Society for Conservation Biology, and Range and Wildlife Club also participated.

Afternoon activities included Power Point presentations by Dr. Kevin Urbanczyk on the BBNP Boquillas Canyon Sandbar Restoration project; Dr. Brad Butler on the Solitario Trip to Big Bend Ranch State Park; and a presentation of desert photography by Crystal Albright of Desert Sports in Terlingua. Butler also led a guided hike up Sul Ross Mountain via the new hike and bike trail in late afternoon.

Student members of the Society for Conservation Biology advertize their Earth Day program .



Sully goes camping! During the Outdoor Expo using equipment available for students to check out from Rec Sports.



Outdoor Expo Committee members (Donna Greene, Chair.; faculty members Brad Butler, and Kevin Urbanczyk; Ryan Baade, Director of Rec Sports; and Trey Darby, student Chair of the Kite Festival) make big plans while enjoying one of the new library tables.

Kite Festival Popular

A Kite Festival was held concurrently with the Outdoor Expo.

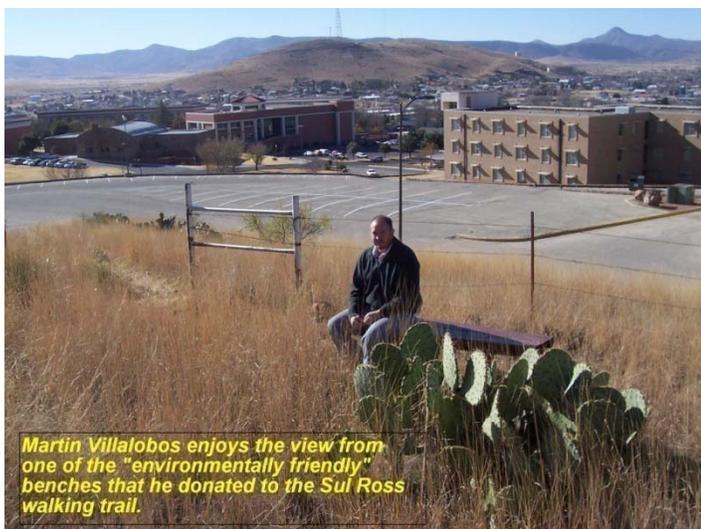
Student, Trey Darby, provided a number of professionally made kites to fly as well as materials and instructions for students to try their own luck at building and designing kites. He also displayed kite facts and history at a table on the mall.

However, the table was soon abandoned by participants looking for stronger winds. About 10 to 15 students, faculty, and a few roaming visitors were always present either flying, attempting to fly, or tangling kites in trees.

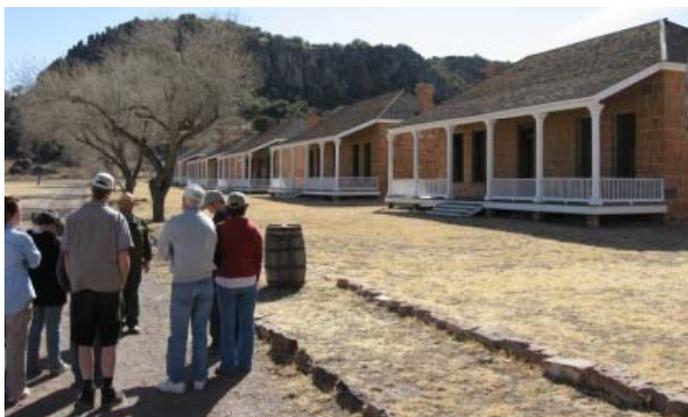
We hope it will become annual and hosted by a club.



Dr. Kathy Stein, Academic Center for Excellence Director, is about to hang this kite in a tree.



Martin Villalobos enjoys the view from one of the "environmentally friendly" benches that he donated to the Sul Ross walking trail.



Matt Walter gave a guided tour of the Fort Davis National Historic Site on the 8th of March, 2009, to the students in his Texas History (History 3309) class. About a dozen students from the Spring 2009 semester class participated in the tour, while the rest of the 25 students in the class visited the Fort on their own. After visiting the Fort as "historical detectives" and finding the answers to various questions posed in the class syllabus, the students wrote and turned papers describing their discoveries and experiences, including what it felt like to walk in the footsteps of those who traveled the Overland Trail more than a century and a half ago.

www.sulross.edu/pages/6775.asp

Blakely Davis works on the Center's webpages with sage advice from OIT's Tish Wetterauer. The website (address above) now contains 6 pages aimed toward students and 9 pages aimed toward faculty.



Outdoor Learning Facilities

Ordering benches and materials for the outdoor classroom has been a slow and frustrating process. The first shipment of cast stone benches were damaged, so a new order had to be processed. Meanwhile, we have moved some tables at the UC out front to see if students use them.



Lloyd Moyo joins several Faculty Seminar members for a social and mixer at Kokernot Lodge.



Dr. David Rohr organized a joint field experience for Sul Ross and Midland College geology students to examine rocks and minerals in the Van Horn area. The students from the two schools interacted and discussed the geology as they hiked about the area. They became aware of both similar and different skills and expertise acquired at different schools. There was more awareness of the breadth of features that they were observing.



Students inspect flora of the Big Bend Ranch Solitario during Brad Butler's pilot project.

Students practice canoeing skills in the Sul Ross pool before heading for the Rio Grande and Kevin Urbanczyk's sandbar measuring pilot project.

