



# Lobo Stars

Newsletter 4 2009-2010

Sul Ross State University Quality Enhancement Plan



Photo by Jason Hennington

## 2008-09 QEP Pilot Innovation Awards

One of former SRSU President R. Vic Morgan's final official acts was presenting 2008-09 QEP Innovation Awards to student William "Trey" Darby, and professors Kevin Urbanczyk and Chris Ritzi. Donna Greene, Coordinator for the Center for Outdoor Learning and Faculty Development looks on. Darby received the student innovation award for a kite festival he organized during the Outdoor EXPO. Urbanczyk received the funded Innovation Award for his Boquillas Canyon Sandbar Restoration Project designed to increase critical thinking skills of students from a variety of classes (GIS, Biology, Hydrology, Geology, archaeology, and recent history). Ritzi received the unfunded Innovation Award for adding an outdoor component to classes including water treatment and conservation, bio-diversity and ecosystems, history of conservation and religion, and studies on air pollution.

## Faculty Seminar Recruits 20 Members

The 2009-10 Faculty Seminar group includes Mazie Will, Jennifer Jordan, Rebecca Schlosser, Jim Bob Salazar, Barney Nelson, Eric Holt, Paul Will, Lloyd Moyo, Darwin Yoder, Ilda Gonzalez, Filemon Zamora, Kevin Urbanczyk, Kip Sullivan, Brad Butler, Kathy Stein, Rick Garcia, Sandra Chambers, Scarlet Anderson, Ryan Baade, and Donna Greene.

**September 4<sup>th</sup>** During this initial 2009-10 icebreaker meeting, each member was provided with a handout upon which to list three items that they felt were working well in their classes and three items they were struggling with. Then each shared one item from their own lists.

**September 18<sup>th</sup>** Brad Butler explained his pilot "The Solitario Project," the purpose of which was to test on a small scale a project that could be used later on a much larger scale. He described both his successes and some of the frustrations, such as that out of 30 students who initially signed up, 7 went. Marketing did not work. More personal contact was needed instead of broadcasting emails. He also received suggestions from the group. Members were given applications for 09-10 pilots.

**October 9<sup>th</sup>** the Summary of Problems with Classes or Students and Summary of Strengths filled out at the first meeting was discussed. Several problems were highlighted and suggestions offered by seminar members to resolve issues such as cell phones, Friday absences, and general lack of engagement.

**October 23<sup>rd</sup>** Dr. Roger Grant was our guest speaker for the QEP Faculty Seminar Meeting/ Luncheon. He demonstrated the use of "clickers" in the classroom.

**November 6<sup>th</sup>** Interim President, Dave Cockrum, will present "The Psychology of Teaching and Learning."

**November 20<sup>th</sup>** Kathy Stein will present her .... Presentation on "Baby Steps toward Critical Thinking" and how to apply the model to their own classroom.

Students Ana Martinez , Alpine, and Jose Chacon , Del Rio, try out the new benches.



## Grant Presents On Clickers to Faculty Seminar

Each seminar member was given a remote handheld device while Dr. Roger Grant, Professor, Chair and

Graduate Advisor for the Physical Education Department, explained how to install and use them, gave suggested classroom activities, listed reasons to use clickers, and provided resources for acquiring and using clickers. He began PILOTING clickers during the summer of 2008 and has had much success. Grant provided a handout of the Power Point presentation and clicker vendor comparison information. The handout was mailed to absent members. A lively discussion followed as faculty traded impressions.

## 2009-10 QEP Pilot Projects Awarded Funding

So far this fall, three pilot projects have been awarded funding through the Center for Outdoor Learning and Faculty Development for a total of \$2,153. Those receiving awards include Patricia Harveson for Geocaching Using GPS and Critical Thinking Skills, Robbie Ray for Area Perimeter on the Mall and Fractions with Chocolate, and Kathy Stein and Julie Vega, ACE Semester Writing Project Using the Mall, Digital Camera, and Peer Review (a continuation from last year).

Requests were judged using the following criteria: potential for enhancing student engagement with an academic class or classes (1—10 points), potential for enhancing critical thinking or other significant academic learning (1—10 points), potential for accurate assessment of these increases in student learning (1—10 points), potential for collaboration (1—10 points), potential for increasing outdoor learning opportunities (1—5 points), and potential for other (determined on a case-by-case basis, 1—5 points). The Application for Pilot Project Funding can be found on the Outdoor Learning/Faculty Support website at <http://www.sulross.edu/pages/6701.asp>.

The awards are chosen by three academic deans: Melanie A. Croy, Jim Case, and Robert Kinucan; Dean of Student Life, Liz Garcia; and Student Government Association President, Christian Celis.

The Center for Outdoor Learning and Faculty Development is still accepting applications with \$2,897 still available. In addition, funding is also available from the Center for undergraduate travel related to outdoor learning and critical thinking.

- Submit your applications ASAP to Donna Greene, ACR 102, Box C-8, [dgreene@sulross.edu](mailto:dgreene@sulross.edu), phone 837-8233.

## QEP Awarding Undergraduate Travel Money

If you have ideas for academically connected undergraduate travel, send your ideas to Donna Green. The following travel has already been awarded QEP Undergraduate funding for 2009-2010:

- 1) **Sandra Chambers and Robbie Ray** "Get to First Base w/Fractions, Ratios, Percentages, & Statistics" (Trip to Hobbs, NM) Spring, \$537.28.
- 2) **Rayford Ball** "Star Party/McDonald Observatory," Fall 09, \$400.
- 3) **Rayford Ball** "Star Party/McDonald Observatory." Spring, \$400.
- 3) **Jennifer Jordan** "Field Study & Reflective Analysis" (trip to San Vicente School, BBNP) Fall 09, \$600.
- 4) **Bonnie Warnock** "Seed Collection for planting grass, ID Garden and to begin development of Trans Pecos Native Plant Materials" Fall 09, \$300.



## Two New Outdoor Clubs Form

Travis Hicks, President of the new "Eyes of Nature" photography club participated in the recent Shooting West Texas Photography Symposium and took this photo (above left) during a workshop at the o6 Ranch. The club has received full approval from the SGA. A second new club for students interested in birding has become the "Birding Committee" for the Society for Conservation Biology Club. Four members in the photo (right above), Chris Pipes, Laura Schnapp, Stacy Duckett, and Rebecca Lemons, try to identify a bird they have just spotted.

Jim Zech  
teaching  
Field Botany  
Class on the  
mall.



**Outdoor Expo**  
**April 7, 2010**  
**on the Mall**



Dauna Hodnett, McNair Scholar, studying hummingbird ecology for her undergraduate research project. Here, Dauna is looking at a black-chinned hummingbird nest in a tree on the Sul Ross campus. A portion of Dauna's project will be to evaluate nesting success for hummingbirds on the Sul Ross campus. Patricia Harveson is overseeing the project.

## Critical Thinking Webinar

QEP is sponsoring a webinar, "Helping College Students Develop Critical Thinking Skills", which will broadcast Thursday, October 29, 1:30 to 2:30 PM, in UC 210. Participants will learn: What critical thinking, also known as "deep thinking", entails; how to develop discussion questions that promote critical thinking; and how to use specific teaching strategies that promote critical thinking.



## Stein Presents Workshop, “Baby Steps Toward Critical Thinking”

Kathy Stein, Director of the Academic Center for Excellence, will present another version of her interactive workshop on critical thinking to the faculty seminar on November 20. She presented one workshop to several faculty members on September 14, 2009.

Stein recently attended the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Critical Thinking in Berkeley, California, sponsored by QEP. During the workshop, “Baby Steps Toward Critical Thinking,” Stein will convey information she received from the conference and her own ideas for finding ways to integrate the elements of critical thinking into teaching.

Workshop participants will learn to: 1) Re-emphasize the elements of thinking as identified by the theoretical model; 2) Engage in metacognition; and 3) Integrate more deliberate methods into their own pedagogy.

## David Cockrum

Interim President of SRSU,  
Provost, and Vice President  
for Academic and Student  
Affairs

will present

“The Psychology of Teaching”  
to the faculty seminar  
November 6<sup>th</sup>



[collegiatelearningassessment]

## 100 Freshmen take CLA Test

As part of our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Sul Ross State University has administered the first part of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) test for critical thinking. During the fall semester, 100 freshmen took the CLA. During the spring semester, 100 graduating seniors will take the CLA.

Scores for both our freshmen and seniors will be adjusted for their ACT/SAT test scores as well as for scores from the comparison institutions. Our final “value-added” score will compare how much our seniors have improved compared to how other schools’ seniors have improved. Schools who recruit students with very high SAT test scores are quite concerned about this test because, as Derek Bok claimed for Harvard, their value-added critical thinking scores sometimes actually went down! If we are doing a good job of teaching, our value-added scores will be high.

**Robbie Ray**, presents a paper on applying critical thinking skills to discussions of common fallacies such as ‘gambler’s’ and ‘sunk costs.’ “Critical thinking in a math class takes thoughtful questions and time to listen.”

