

From the Editor's Desk

Donald W. Forrester, Editor

Georgia Conference on College and University Teaching—2000

Thanks to the support of so many, the Georgia Conference on College and University Teaching, February 3-4, was an unqualified success. More than one hundred and fifty colleagues from about two dozen University System institutions attended. Additionally, several attendees and presenters came from non-system colleges and universities, such as Beulah Heights Bible College, Clark Atlanta University and Clemson University. This was not a conference of bystanders and observers. Virtually everyone participated in discussion and fully two-thirds of the registrants were either presenters or moderators.

The new Kennesaw State Continuing Education Center provided new, spacious conference rooms, the latest technology and plenty of free parking. Although renovation was still underway and interior decoration was incomplete, there was plenty of room for everyone, unlike the crowded conditions we faced in recent years. Though we intentionally tried to limit the registration to about 150, experience now suggests that growth is possible, without sacrificing the "small conference" atmosphere that many value.

The *e-generation* is here. Most of the pre-conference correspondence with presenters was conducted via e-mail. Also, our experiment with on-line conference evaluation worked very well. About a third of the participants responded—a great improvement over last year. The respondents gave the conference mostly high grades, but also made some helpful suggestions for improvements.

Special words of thanks are due to the KSU Continuing Education Staff, particularly Todd Shinholster, Director of Conferences, Shiela Shinholster, Marketing Coordinator and Linda Solomon, Registration Administrative Supervisor. To these and those who assisted them we express heartiest appreciation. Of course CETL Secretary, Brenda Curtis, did splendid work both before the conference and "cleaning up the rubble" of post-conference details.

Finally, we extend our special appreciation for the support, guidance and hard work given by the Conference Steering Committee. Members are James Burran, President of Dalton State College, Tricia Kalivoda, Coordinator of Faculty Development, University of Georgia, Billie Pendleton-Parker, Assistant Director, Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Georgia Institute of Technology and Kandis Steele, Director of the Center for Professional Development, Gainesville College.

Reaching Through Teaching to Go On-line

Assuming that all the many details can be worked out before the fall, the next issue of *Reaching Through Teaching*, Volume XIV, Number 1, will be published

on-line. This is in keeping with the age we live in and the trends in higher education scholarship. We believe the time is right.

What are the drawbacks? The immediate response is visceral. Who can deny the familiarity we professors feel with holding a book in our hands, the look and smell of ink on paper and the possibility of underlining important passages and writing marginal notes? For many of us this represents a lifetime of practice. There is also the stigma of the *Web Wasteland*, where anything goes, reasonable or not, scholarly or not, evaluated or not. The belief persists that hard copy is somehow more scholarly than what comes over the Internet. There is also the nagging perception that what appears on the computer monitor is transitory, temporary and ephemeral, unlike the world's great collections of books and manuscripts.

Then why do it? Simply, the *pros* greatly outweigh the *cons*. We should no more ignore this technology than 16th century scholars should have failed to exploit the invention of movable type printing. Frankly, trash has always been published: printed in books, hand lettered on vellum or papyrus or chiseled in granite. For the past thirteen years, the editors of *Reaching Through Teaching* have tried to maintain high standards for a scholarly but admittedly unrefereed forum for ideas on the practice and philosophy of college and university teaching. That must not change.

Who knows how permanent computer-based publication is or will be? Certainly, it is a way to store vast amounts of material without using up space on library shelves. Let us never forget the legendary Library of Alexandria, reportedly the greatest storehouse of knowledge in the ancient world. It burned! Remember, too, that printing is increasingly expensive. A small-budget journal, *Reaching Through Teaching* has a circulation of less than 1,000. On-line publication will make it far more accessible to many more faculty colleagues, worldwide, than we ever conceived possible when we began more than a decade ago.

An *Index* of *Reaching Through Teaching* articles has never existed, and even if it did, back issues are in very limited supply. A topical and alphabetical index of several hundred articles from all past volumes will be made available as soon as possible.

What are the challenges? As already stated, maintaining and improving quality is paramount. Only time will tell what the next step should be. Should a selection committee (other than the editor and assistant editor) be used? Second in importance is finding a way to promote awareness of *Reaching Through Teaching* among scholars everywhere. But what happens if this broader availability results in more article submissions than a small staff can process? No doubt, totally unforeseen challenges will arise. Still, the step must be taken. The time has come. Your comments are welcome. (dforrest@alltel.net)