First-year students seeing big difference in small-class initiative

The idea of emphasizing smaller classes for freshmen is to make a larger impact on learning. So far, the results of an expanded effort to that effect on campus are promising.

Starting this fall, the college included all freshmen in the FirstChoice experience of at least one class with enrollment capped at 19 students. It fulfills an Engagement 2000 strategy to "provide a first-year academic experience for all new students" to create a learner-centered academic culture.

Better interaction is a common theme cited by the budding journalism majors in a "History of American Journalism" class taught by Linda Loomis. "I think it's a better environment because she doesn't only lecture to us, she asks our opinion," said Glorisl Smith of Rochester. "We feel like we get to know each student by heart and make new friends." Lynn Collier of Latham concurred. "I definitely feel closer to the people in this class, which makes for a better learning environment," she said. "I feel like I have additional closeness to the professor, which helps me learn."

Dan Kruse of North Salem also noted the increase in individual attention. "It's a lot easier to get help from the teacher," he said. "She knows you and can help you more specifically. You can find out more what you as a person need to work on."

Michael Benjamin from Sidney appreciated the opportunity to work in a more interactive setting. "We just did a project here in groups of four, working together in and outside of class," he said. "We're about to do a PowerPoint presentation. That's definitely something I've never done in a lecture hall."

In Gwen Kay's preceptor class, "The American Experience: 1920s," freshmen found the smaller class size allowing for opportunities for learning to come alive, such as exploring topics and tashons from the era or discussing topics of the day.

"It gives us firsthand experience of what the 1920s were like," said Greg Zak of Hampton Bays. "With the smaller classes, it's better."

Tyler Branch of Saranac Lake has found that the class offers better group interaction. "It gives a chance for everyone to be heard," he said.

After a brief exchange, a childhood education major from West Babylon, agreed: "Everyone has the chance to get involved and participate."

‘You have to do the work’

The smaller class also means that students have to be responsible, said Kristin Benoist, a journalism major from Rochester. "It's one class where it's hard to get away with stuff you may be able to in a large lecture hall," she said. "You have to do the work. You can't just walk in.

From a teaching perspective, Kay finds the smaller classes rewarding. "With 19 students, I can assign each piece of a person's project to Soporold-Loeb case, from evidence to newspaper accounts to court testimony, and we can piece together what happened. We can engage in debate — prosecution versus defense — about the issues in the Scopes trial," she said. "A class significantly larger would make these and other activities logistically impossible, and impractical."

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November about autism selected

The Speed of Dark by Elizabeth Moon sped to the top of the list to become the 2005 Oswego Reading Initiative Book selection to be read next summer by the campus community. The book is the first novel in the ORI series.

Set in the near future, when most diseases are history, the book tells the story of a well-adjusted autistic man who is offered an experimental cure for his condition. "If I had not been what I am, what would I have been?" he wonders.

"A lot of novels promise to change the way a reader sees the world; The Speed of Dark actually does," the Washington Post Book World wrote. The Seattle Times called it "an engaging journey into the dark edges that define the self."

The novel won the 2003 Nebula Award for best novel and was a finalist for the Arthur C. Clarke Award, both science fiction prizes. Moon is a well-known science fiction writer, but The Speed of Dark is generally categorized as literary fiction.

Previous ORI selections have been The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in the Desert by Idaho State University in Syracuse or Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md.

Mitchell has benefited from being "challenged and inspired" during her years at Oswego, she said. "The challenges I have faced, both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities, have prepared me to be an active learner throughout life and a leader in all my endeavors," Mitchell said. "I have been inspired by the accomplishments of the faculty, staff and other students at the college and have seen that lofty goals are attainable through hard work and perseverance."

Mitchell expects her diversity of learning to serve her well in the future. "What I am most thankful for is that everyone has the opportunity to work in a more interactive setting. "We were like," said Greg Zak of Hampton Bays. "With the smaller classes, it's better."

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December graduates preparing for next step

Amanda Stinebrickner hopes to translate her degree and experience into a position as a police officer. She has completed the state trooper exam and will take four other police exams this month. "After that, I will be playing the waiting game until I hear from any of the departments to let me know that I have been accepted into their police academy," said Stinebrickner, who hails from Boonville.

Courses in her major, public justice, and minor, forensic science, "really did help a lot in preparing me with the knowledge of the law and what to expect with jobs in such fields," she said.

Her internship with the Fulton Police Department allowed her to put all the pieces together. "I was able to see how the theories and laws that I have learned in my classroom experience are really related to everyday police work," she said. "I was not only able to see the situations that they dealt with on a day-to-day basis, but also to get knowledge on the officers on a more personal level to see how police work has affected their lives."

Experts expect December graduates to find an increasingly warm job market in the months ahead. Studies of leading business indicators forecast a 20 percent increase in hiring for 2005 graduates, noted Bob Casper, director of career services.

"We've had much better than at our job fairs and just doing on-campus interviews," Casper said. Hiring in fields such as accounting, business and education have already picked up, he added. ---

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Published by the Office of Public Affairs for the SUNY Oswego Community
Making spirits bright — Members of the college’s Student Athlete Mentors program — including junior broadcasting and mass communication major Corey Stark (left) and senior elementary education major Vania Cheung — have decorated a tree for SUNY Oswego’s Toy Drive. Students and staff can pick a paper ornament with a child’s name, age and gender from trees in various campus buildings. Participants can donate an unwrapped gift for that child before Dec. 21.

People in action

Bruce Aitchsler, professor and chair of political science, was a discussant on a panel Nov. 12 at the Northeastern Political Science Association conference in Boston. The panel topic was “Selecting Officeholders in the United States.”

Nancy Bellows, director of the Center for Business and Community Development, spoke at the Workforce Force New York fall conference, held in October in White Plains. Her topic was “Strategic Workforce Planning and Development.” She shared strategies to engage the wider community in the planning process, the use of focus groups to gather necessary data and holding public issues forums. She briefed conference participants on identifying industry clusters and addressing human resource challenges.

Alberth Illisvort, associate professor of English, attended the 19th annual International Conference on Literature and the Visual Arts in Atlanta Oct. 22 to 24, sponsored by the State University of West Georgia. In topic was “Truth and Mendacity.” He served as moderator for the panel on Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James and presented a paper: “James’s Liars: Creative Dopplegity in The Aspern Papers and Other Works.”

More depressive symptoms in men with a high risk of heart disease were associated with a significantly higher risk of stroke death in a long-term study. An article co-authored by Oswego’s Brooks B. Gump reported this week in Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association. Gump, an associate professor of psychology, and co-author Karen A. Matthews, a professor of psychiatry, psychology and epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh, found that even mild depressive symptoms increased the risk of dying from stroke. Data for the study of 12,866 men from across the country came from the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial, based at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis. After adjusting for possible confounders, the researchers found that men in the top one-fifth of depression scores had double the risk of stroke, compared to subjects in the lowest fifth.

Senior wrestler reaches 100th win
Tenkoran Agyeman became only the fifth Oswego State wrestler to reach the 100-win plateau, accomplishing the feat at the Doug Parker Invitational hosted by Springfield College last month. Competing at 141 pounds, the senior from the Bronx earned his 100th win in the opening round of the tournament, scoring a 18-3 decision over Ryan Desoto of Rhode Island College. The two-time All-American then added four more victories en route to winning his weight class. He is at 104 wins, and counting.

Agyeman

Agyeman is currently a perfect 10-0 on the season and ranked fourth nationally in his weight class in the latest NWCA/Brute/Adidas Division III rankings. The Laker grapplers are ranked 18th in the nation.
Campus Update

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Oswego professor participates in major Chinese research project

A professor in Oswego’s School of Business is participating in a major research project in China that aims to reduce inefficiencies in the process of manufacturing, distributing and selling products.

Ding Zhang, associate professor of marketing and management, became involved during his 2003 sabbatical at Fudan University’s School of Management in Shanghai, where he worked with Daoli Zhu and others on the project proposal.

Earlier this semester he learned that the National Science Foundation of China has funded the $980,000 project for three years. The agency funded one major research project in each of a dozen critical subject areas, he said, and this is the project funded in the area of supply chain management. After the three-year first phase, the research team can apply for two more years of funding.

Zhang will work on the project when he returns to Fudan University each summer, with the grant covering many of his expenses, he said.

With economic globalization and the development of information technology, Zhang said, supply chain management has become a critical issue all over the world. Raw materials often come from one continent and labor for manufacture from another, with sale and delivery occurring on yet another, he explained. If too many products are ordered or if they are ordered at the wrong time, they may go to waste or, for products with a long life, incur onerous warehousing costs. He cited Cisco Systems’ $2.5 billion loss in wasted inventory in 2001.

Zhang described the global market as a huge system or network of suppliers, manufacturers, sellers and buyers, all connected by the flow of materials, capital and information.

The researchers are using computer technology and mathematical models to determine how to coordinate the system and advise the Chinese government on setting policy that will increase the system’s efficiency. “We are proposing a general model that can be applied to many different products,” Zhang said.

Whereas the United States has a relatively well-developed logistical system for supply chain management, where each problem can often be solved as it arises, he said, all the problems are exploding at once in China, which has experienced tremendous economic growth and investment from outside in the past two decades. China’s centralized form of government can be an advantage in dealing with problems from a systems perspective, he noted.

Zhang has published many journal articles and book chapters in the field of operations management and research, and is co-author of a widely cited book on project dynamical systems, and received SUNY Oswego’s Provost’s Award for Teaching Excellence in 2003.

— Julie Harrison Blissert

Archeology lab enriches students’ experience

Oswego’s anthropology students can get even more hands-on experience with the addition of an indoor archeology lab in the basement of Mahar Hall.

“The goal is to give students some sense of how excavation works,” said Steve Saraydar, associate professor of anthropology. Unlike the outdoor site, the new facility is accessible year-round.

The lab, in Room 2 or Mahar Hall, opened last spring and can be used by students in various introductory and advanced archeology and forensic anthropology courses, Saraydar said, as well as for demonstrations for local schoolteachers and their classes.

Besides building a large space for the soil where experimental excavations take place, campus workers who converted the former storage room into the archeology lab added new lighting and a heating system and partitioned off a corner still used by cleaning staff.

The indoor lab complements the outdoor experimental archeology site north of Mahar Hall that Saraydar established five years ago, when he revamped the teaching of archeology at Oswego to incorporate the undergraduate level.

Experimental dig facilities are becoming more common at colleges, Saraydar said, but with the addition of the indoor facility, “I haven’t seen anything quite like what we have here.”

The indoor and outdoor locations where students actually unearth buried objects are complemented by the kind of computer and electronic tools that professional archeologists use, Saraydar said.

Excavating — Anthropology Professor Stephen Saraydar, center, helps students Jason Wallace, a senior education major, left, and Cole Greiner, a sophomore anthropology major, unearth artifacts at the new experimental archeology lab in Mahar Hall.

The latest acquisition is a total station, which is used for surveying a complete site and recording in three dimensions the location, down to the millimeter, of each object found as layers of the site are excavated. Saraydar said he plans to develop a course on how to use the Leica instrument, which will also be used in actual fieldwork.

— Julie Harrison Blissert

Professor’s novel bridges two cultures

A bicultural novel in Spanish became available to readers in its other culture earlier this year when Beatriz Salcedo-Strumpf’s first novel was translated and published in English.

Salcedo-Strumpf is a visiting assistant professor of Spanish in Oswego’s department of modern languages and literatures. She is working on her dissertation in Latin American literature, specifically on Mexican women writers, at Syracuse University.

And she is a Mexican woman writer herself, having published short stories in the Miami-based literary journal Biquisana and her novel Correo Electrónico para Amantes in Spanish and E-mail for Lovers in English.

The book tells the story of Milagros, or Mila, a Mexican woman who is married to an American man in upstate New York, through e-mail correspondence with a man in Mexico. It is full of the details of everyday life in language that is plain and simple yet often poetic. A sample:

“My American friends have luminous, even uplift ing names like ‘Amber’ and ‘Crystal’ and ‘Joy’ . . . I consider some of the girls from my childhood and wonder if their parents ever thought about the meanings of the names they anointed them with, names like ‘Dolores,’ ‘Maritza’ and ‘Soleada,’ echoes of pain, suffering and loneliness.”

Talk of food, music, literature, the weather — sun and snow — and cats fills the e-mails as they are woven into a novel whose ultimate concern is relationships, between individuals and between cultures.

Salcedo-Strumpf is using Correo Electrónico para Amantes in a course she is teaching this semester on Mexican women writers.

In 2000, Ediciones Nuevo Espacio in New Jersey published Correo Electrónico para Amantes in its Graffiti Collection, books printed on demand as they are ordered online. AuthorHouse has published the English edition in the same manner. Both are priced at $12.95. The English version is also available from the publisher as an electronic book for $3.95.

— Julie Harrison Blissert

Center to continue contract for social services agencies

The Center for Business and Community Development will continue to facilitate training and consulting responsibilities for the Oswego County Workforce Development Board of Oswego County.

Located in Room 101 of Rich Hall, the Center for Business and Community Development enhances and promotes sustainable economic vitality through workforce, business and community development. It coordinates a number of programs such as the Small Business Development Center, the Micro Enterprise Program, Leadership Oswego County, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and the activities of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County.

For more information, call 312-3492.

Oswego professor participates in major Chinese research project

The five-year contract is for $1.32 million in 2005 and asks the center to manage the consulting services for the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The Oswego center was originally awarded this contract for a three-year run from 2002 to 2004.

The OTDA aims to create increased self-sufficiency for New York state residents “through the efficient delivery of temporary and transitional assistance, disability assistance, and the collection of child support,” according to the agency’s mission statement.

In support of this mission, the Oswego center utilizes both on-campus resources and outside consultants to train OTDA staff on a variety of topics ranging from general organizational development to specialized training on emergency management and welfare fraud.

Oswego earned the contract among a competitive field of other colleges and universities from around the state, said Nancy Hallow, director of the center.

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Announcements

Book donations sought
Penfield Library Associates and Penfield Library are now accepting donations for the annual book sale, the library’s major fund-raising effort to be held in the library in April. Donations of books, videos, CDs and children’s books are especially needed. Both hardcover and paperback books are welcome, fiction or nonfiction. Donated materials should be clean and in good condition. Interested donors should contact librarians Drew Urbaneck (312-3567) or Michelle Parry (312-3562) for more information or to make arrangements for delivery of large donations.

Faculty, staff art exhibit planned
Penfield Library and its Lake Effect Café are sponsoring a Juried Art Exhibit for Staff and Faculty, to be on display in the café next semester from Jan. 17 to March 15. Faculty and staff are invited to submit their artwork by Jan. 10 for consideration. Artwork can be fine art — such as painting, photography and sculpture — or craft — such as needlework, quilts and jewelry. Prizes will be awarded, said Deade Hutton of Penfield Library. For more information, contact hutton@oswego.edu or 312-4267.

Gospel Choir sings Saturday
The Gospel Choir will hold its annual Christmas concert at 6 p.m. Saturday in the Hewitt Union ballroom. “There will be singing, praise dancing, an acting portion, poetry reading and a guest speaker,” said Ebony M. Coleman, vice president of the choir. “All are invited and welcomed to join us in the holiday spirit,” she added.

‘Collage’ concert to feature faculty, students in scholarship benefit
Oswego music faculty and students will join forces for “Collage,” the department’s annual scholarship concert, at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10, in Tyler Hall’s Watertman Theatre. A reception at the Oswego Tea Company on East First Street, with free coffee, will follow the show. The concert will include “a wide variety of music, from jazz to classical to Beethoven to Renaissance and back again,” said Juile Pretzat, professor and chair of music. The College Choir, Chamber Singers, State Singers, Concert Band, Jazz Orchestra and College-Community Orchestra will all take part. Featured faculty members will include Rob Auler, Todd Gruber, Rick Holland, Juan LaManna, Angela Space and Seunghee Yang performing works by the likes of Stravinsky, Sarasate and Schubert. “We’re doing this to showcase our abilities, raise awareness of our programs, provide funding for scholarships and to give the community a holiday-season event everyone can enjoy,” said Auler, show organizer and assistant professor of music. Tickets are $10 ($5 for students, seniors and SUNY Oswego students). For reservations, call Tyler Hall box office at 312-2141.

Play to benefit theatre students
Oswego students will spoof more than 500 years of Western history with the theatre presentation “The Complete History of America (Abridged)” Dec. 10 to 12 in the Hewitt Union ballroom. Zach Lenin will direct the production, which serves as a fund-raiser to support students attending the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. “The show takes us on a journey through the annuals of American history, starting in 1492 and continuing right through to modern-day hilarity,” said Levin, a senior theatre major from Fulton.

Renaissance Madrigal Banquet to offer food, entertainment
The traditional feast of food and entertainment will return this weekend when the 11th annual Renaissance Madrigal Banquet unfolds at The Forum in Hewitt Union, at 6 p.m. Saturday and 5:30 p.m. Sunday. Reservations are due today at Tyler Hall box office, 312-2141. Presented by the music and theatre departments, the festivities will include actors and musicians who invite the audience to take part in a holiday celebration in an English Country manor house during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. An array of colorful characters will provide musical entertainment as well as dancing, juggling and a commedia-inspired play titled “The Dentist.” The authentic menu will recreate 16th century delicacies, with the meal served banquet style. Entrees will include chicken with wine and cheese sauce, roasted salmon in an onion wine sauce and baked courgette (zucchini). Hors d’oeuvres, soup, side dishes and dessert round out the menu planned and prepared by Auxiliary Services. The cost of $32 ($30 for senior citizens and students, $28 for SUNY Oswego students) includes the meal, entertainment and tax. Wine and other libations will be available at extra cost.

Police report
Since Nov. 12, University Police have investigated several cases of theft, vandalism and harassment and made 11 arrests. University Police charged a Seneca Hall resident with forgery and criminal possession of a forgery device, both felonies, and possession of marijuana. He is accused of making false drivers’ licenses. Two students were charged with criminal possession of a forged instrument. They are accused of having forged licenses. One was also charged with possession of marijuana. Police charged a 51-year-old Fulton man with criminal contempt and harassment. He is accused of disobeying an order of protection. A 21-year-old student was charged with driving while intoxicated, driving with a blood alcohol content above .08 and a driving infraction. Police charged two Seneca Hall residents with underaged possession of alcohol. They also charged two other Seneca residents with unlawful possession of marijuana.

Officers charged an 18-year-old Seneca Hall resident with criminal possession of stolen property, a home for sale sign. An 18-year-old Cayuga Hall resident was charged with criminal mischief. He is accused of damaging a water fountain.

Calendar highlights
• Jazz Orchestra concert, today
• Display-to-Archives Reception, Dec. 2
• College Council meeting, Dec. 3
• Renaissance Madrigal Banquet, Dec. 4 and 5
• Gospel Choir Christmas concert, Dec. 4
• Music department scholarship concert, Dec. 10
• “The Complete History of America (Abridged),” Dec. 10 to 12
• December graduation, Dec. 18
For more complete calendar, see SUNY Oswego Events online at www.oswego.edu/news/calendar.

Spotlight
Taylor loves it ‘when a plan comes together’
The Campus Update Spotlight shines on Paul Taylor this week. The assistant director of Campus Technology Services, he has been a full-time campus employee since 1985.

Q. How would you describe your job and responsibilities? A. My part of the organization has the primary job responsiblity of maintaining public and department labs and central servers, such as the e-mail server, Web server, file server and OmniUpdate server. I think we’re currently running approximately 14 large computer servers. We maintain about 30 public and department labs plus small clusters of kiosks in dining halls, Hewitt Union and Lee Hall. I have five full-time employees and a cadre of student workers that ranges from 40 to 60.

Q. What is your favorite part of working at Oswego? A. To quote an old “A-Team” episode, I love it when a plan comes together. I really enjoy it when you spend a lot of time on a project, plan thoroughly and execute flawlessly. It doesn’t always happen that way, but it’s nice when it does.

Q. What is your impression of Oswego’s students? A. I like working with students. I’ve seen a great diversity of students who have been working with me or for me. There are a lot of talented students. I really enjoy watching them grow. You see their development through school as they mature, as they acquire new skills, as they acquire new abilities, as they become finely tuned members of the community. Overall, I think Oswego has a high-quality student population.

Q. What is your educational background? A. I have a bachelor’s in computer science from SUNY Oswego.

Q. What achievement are you most proud of? A. Perhaps my work with scouts. I’ve done a lot of work with them over the years. I think that scouting does a great service to the boys, the communities and the families. I’ve done a lot of service for the organization, and I know the organization has provided a lot for communities and families throughout the world.

Q. Other than scouts, do you have any hobbies? A. Maybe too many of them. I like to spend time with family. Computers are a hobby. I hunt. I used to fish when I had time. Hiking, camping, lots of outdoor stuff. There are a few others and sundry things that I dabble in.

Q. What can you tell us about your family? A. I have a wife, Kathy, and two kids, Jason and Scott. Jason is currently at SUNY Cortland pursuing a degree in adolescence education in physics. Scott is in middle school. We live near downtown Oswego.


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