

June 10, 2003

TO: Bush Committee for Faculty Development

FROM: Michael Waddell, on behalf of the *Augustana Symposium* Steering Committee

RE: Report on the *Augustana Symposium*

Colleagues,

According to the Bush Grant guidelines, we are submitting the following report as a summary and evaluation of the *Augustana Symposium*. This event was made possible largely by the Bush Committee's generosity, and we hope you are as pleased with the outcome as we are.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the members of the Symposium Committee, the Bush Foundation and the Bush Committee for Faculty Development. I anticipate that this will be the last year I chair the Symposium. Realizing the vision for this program has been a wonderful experience, and I am very indebted to the members of the Symposium Committee for working side by side with me to create the program, as well as to the Bush Committee/Foundation for providing us with the financial resources to run the event for the past three years.

On behalf of the *Symposium* Committee,

Michael Waddell, Ph.D.

I. DESCRIPTION OF SYMPOSIUM

The third annual *Augustana Symposium* was held on Saturday, April 12, 2003.

A. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

- **Events:** the *Symposium* was comprised of the following events: student research presentations, a banquet and a keynote address. The keynote, "The End of Ethics in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," was delivered by John Lantos, MD (University of Chicago School of Medicine and MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics).
- **Presenters:** twenty-eight students, representing all three divisions of the college, presented their original research in either oral or poster sessions. These students collaborated with eighteen faculty members to develop their research.
- **Attendance:** there were approximately two hundred audience members during the student research presentations, approximately 50 guests at the banquet, and approximately one hundred fifty audience members at the keynote address.
- **Audience members:** the various audiences were comprised of Augustana students, faculty and staff; parents of student presenters; invited guests from the community (e.g., members of the Sioux Falls medical community); other citizens of Sioux Falls.

B. FINANCES

Funding for the *Symposium* was provided by:

- The Bush Committee for Faculty Development (\$4000).
- The Office of Academic Affairs (<\$2000)

A full description of the Symposium budget is attached. However, in broad strokes, the expenses of the *Symposium* are as follows:

Printing	\$195.72
Hospitality	\$1449.97
Keynote Speaker	\$2500.00
Hotel	app. \$100
TOTAL	\$4245.69

A bit of quick math indicates that the Symposium came in at well under the \$6000 allotted to the program. We will use the full \$4000 provided by the Bush grant and approximately \$245.69 from Academic Affairs. The remainder of the \$2000 pledged by Academic Affairs should roll over into next year's budget, as the college has pledged \$5000 to be contributed to the program during the three year cycle of the Bush grant.

C. PERSONNEL

There were many people who contributed to the *Symposium*, but the members of the **Steering Committee** deserve special recognition:

Martin Dennis (Psychology): Call for Papers, Schedule of Presentations.

Steve Matzner (Biology): Call for Papers, Schedule of Presentations.

Elizabeth Tolman (Communications): Publicity.

Jennifer Waddell (Psychology/Economics): Hospitality, including refreshments, banquet, keynote reception and travel arrangements for the speaker.

Michael Waddell (Philosophy): Chair, arrangements for speaker.

II. ASSESSMENT

A. GOALS

The *Symposium* was constructed with four goals in mind:

- to foster the pedagogy of student research
- to foster collaboration between students and faculty
- to contribute to the intellectual climate on campus
- to “open windows” between Augustana and other intellectual communities

B. DATA

In order to assess the *Symposium*'s success in attaining these goals, we developed three assessment instruments; each instrument used the methodology of self-reported survey. The first instrument was intended to solicit constructive feedback on individual student presentations. These forms were collected and distributed to the respective teams of student researchers and faculty collaborators so that faculty members could help students process audience comments. The second instrument was a general form given to all audience members who attended the student research presentations. This form asked audience members to provide feedback for the *Symposium* program itself. Finally, a special instrument was distributed to student presenters and their faculty collaborators in order to assess the educational experience that arose out of participating in the *Symposium*. Questions asked respondents either 1) to place their answers on a Likert scale of “1- 7” (where one indicated the lowest rating and seven indicated the highest) or 2) to choose between answers of “yes or no.” Additional space was provided so that respondents could also make open-ended comments. This year, participants in the Symposium (i.e., student presenters and faculty collaborators) were also given the opportunity to write an “impact on learning” statement as part of the assessment process.

The following paragraphs contain information about the data garnered by these instruments.

GOAL #1: FOSTERING THE PEDAGOGY OF STUDENT RESEARCH

Several questions on both the “Audience Comments” and “Student Presenter/Faculty Collaborator” forms provided information regarding the *Symposium*’s efficacy for fostering research.

“Did the Symposium raise your awareness of student research at Augustana?”

Presenters/Collaborators	Mean: 5.6**
General Audience	Mean: 5.98***

**Recall that all means are based on a seven point Likert scale (with a score of “1” being the lowest and a score of “7” being the highest).

*** General Audience scores reflect only responses from members of the Augustana Community (viz., students, faculty, staff). Remarks from visitors are not included in this report.

“How did participating in the Symposium affect your opinion of student research at Augustana?”

Presenters/Collaborators	Mean: 5.9
General Audience	Mean: 6.15

“Did the opportunity to present at the Symposium encourage you either to undertake or further develop a collaborative research project beyond what you would have otherwise done?”

Presenters/Collaborators	Mean: 5.1 [6.125 if two faculty outliers are removed]
General Audience	Mean: NA

“How did participating in this **research** affect the quality of your overall experience as a student or faculty member at Augustana?”

Presenters/Collaborators	Mean: 6.5
General Audience	Mean: NA

“Do you/your student plan to present this research off-campus?”

Presenters/Collaborators	Frequency: 6 Yes / 3 No
General Audience	Frequency: NA

“If so, do you think the experience of presenting at the Symposium will improve the off-campus presentation?”

Presenters/Collaborators **Frequency: 3 Yes / 3 No**
General Audience Frequency: NA

“Was the feedback provided by the audience members beneficial for improving your research and/or presentation?”

Presenters/Collaborators **Frequency: 7 Yes / 1 No**
General Audience Frequency: NA

“After experiencing the Symposium, would you like to participate in collaborative student/faculty research?”

Presenters/Collaborators Frequency: NA
General Audience **Frequency: 32 Yes / 15 No**

GOAL #2: FOSTERING COLLABORATION BETWEEN FACULTY AND STUDENTS

“How did **collaborating** with a student or faculty member to conduct this research affect your overall experience as a student or faculty member at Augustana?”

Presenters/Collaborators **Mean: 6.1**
General Audience Mean: NA

GOAL #3: CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE ON CAMPUS

“Overall, how intellectually stimulating were the Symposium events/research presentations?”

Presenters/Collaborators **Mean: 5.56**
General Audience **Mean: 5.92**

GOAL #4: OPENING WINDOWS

The questions about presenting off-campus can be construed as speaking to one aspect of the “open windows” objective, viz. they address how the Symposium encourages and facilitates presentation of Augustana student research to other communities. Readers can find the data culled from these questions under GOAL #1 above.

The *Symposium*'s accomplishment with respect to this objective can also be gauged by considering some anecdotal information.

First, the event brought in a recognized expert from a major university hospital and the top bioethics center in the country. In addition to speaking to a very large audience, the keynote speaker attended several student research presentations and participated in the banquet. We have been very fortunate to be able to find keynote speakers who take our students' research seriously, often engaging in extended conversations about their work after the presentation sessions are

completed. In this way, the keynote speakers help Augustana to forge new connections with the larger academic world.

Second, the audience at the student presentations and keynote address contained several members of the Sioux Falls public. Some of these guests also participated in the banquet, and several noted afterward how much they enjoyed the events. In this regard, the Symposium facilitated good relations with the city of Sioux Falls and surrounding area.

Third, in addition to the many students, staff and faculty who attended Symposium events, there were a significant number of parents and family members who came to campus to hear their students' research presentations. Many of these family members also came to the keynote address. Without exception, they were extremely enthusiastic about the Symposium.

Fourth, perhaps the most important barrier we crossed is the invisible barrier between classroom space and public space. Often, students (and sometimes even faculty) leave their intellectual interests in the classroom and fail to integrate their public lives with their academic pursuits. It was wonderful to see students turn out in support of their friends' research, just as they would for the volleyball team or the choir; it was even more wonderful to hear those same students, hours and even days later, talking about the papers they had heard. Over the past three years, I have witnessed a small but burgeoning culture of student research begin to develop at Augustana. Students have become accustomed to talk publicly about their "research programs" and to seek out faculty mentors very early in their academic careers in order to develop research programs. This culture of research and inquiry, if it continues to thrive, will be the most significant accomplishment of the Symposium program and will have a meaningful impact on the Augustana community.

GENERAL QUESTION

One final question was asked of all respondents:

"Would you like to see the Symposium program continue in the future?"

Presenters/Collaborators	Frequency: 9 Yes / 0 No
General Audience	Frequency: 50 Yes / 0 No

C. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This year, we received more response forms from audience members than has been common, but received far fewer responses from student presenters and faculty collaborators than we have in the past. The only change made to the assessment process this year was the addition of the "impact on learning" statement for student presenters and faculty collaborators; this variable might be a factor in the low presenter/collaborator responderate. Please note: since the number of people who responded to the assessment instruments is quite low, it is difficult to take much significance from the data collected. However, certain general attitudes seem to be apparent.

First, all of the four stated goals were met with good success. Responses to the questions

assessing the accomplishment of these goals were overwhelmingly positive, particularly with regard to the two pedagogical goals of fostering active research and student/faculty collaboration. As positive as all of the results were, some of the reported means were skewed by outliers that do not really reflect the success of the Symposium. For example, two faculty members, both of whom come from the department on campus that is perhaps most active in student research, reported that the Symposium encouraged them only “very little” (a score of “1”) to participate in projects beyond what they would otherwise have done. There are very few departments on campus where this is likely to be true. Similarly, because some disciplines’ scholarly conferences are held in the fall or early spring, participants from these disciplines reported lower scores with respect to the Symposium’s helping them to prepare for off-campus presentation. At the same time, these participants note that the opportunity to present, even on-campus, is always beneficial, regardless of whether it occurs before or after the off-campus presentation. Finally, it is worth noting that students consistently give the Symposium slightly higher scores than faculty do. In many categories—for example, increasing awareness of student research—these lower faculty scores actually reflect the Symposium’s success: the program has done such a good job of publicizing student research that active faculty members are no longer having their awareness of this research “increased.” In the first two years of the event, this particular score was very high for students and faculty alike. At this point, it seems that many faculty members are aware of the opportunities for involvement but that students are still learning a lot about what can be done at Augustana by attending the Symposium. One would expect this to continue to be an important outcome of the Symposium, since nearly 500 new students arrive on campus every year.

Second, as in every year that the Symposium has occurred, there was universal consensus that the *Symposium* program ought to be continued in the future.

III. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The assessment data suggests that the *Symposium* has been successful on all fronts. However, there are several adjustments that the steering committee would like to make in order to improve the extant program and several other additions we would like to make in order to expand the scope of the program.

A. ADJUSTMENTS TO EXTANT PROGRAM

- **Earlier announcement** of the *Symposium* program to students and faculty.
- **More extensive advertising** on and off campus. Consider ways to integrate more of the regional professional and academic communities in the event.

B. ADDITIONS TO PROGRAM

- **Encourage interdisciplinary exploration** of a particular topic or topics, organizing some sessions around common topics.
- Facilitate a **faculty workshop** on mentoring students through the research process. This workshop might be carried out in cooperation with the Bush Committee and include panelists from departments with more advanced student research programs. Topics might include: how to get students involved in research, overcoming difficulties in collaborative research, introducing students to disciplinary presentation protocol, etc.
- Organize **student workshops** on various stages of the research process (e.g. using library resources to conduct research, academic speaking, and the like).
- Work with **Admissions Office** to integrate the *Symposium* into Augustana's efforts to attract academically talented and motivated students.